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development concept plan
interpretive prospectus
environmental assessment

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THURMOND
NEW RIVER GORGE

NATIONAL RIVER / WEST VIRGINIA

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development concept plan/interpretive prospectus
environmental assessment

draft
october 1989

THURMOND
NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL RIVER • WEST VIRGINIA

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

SUMMARY

This *Development Concept Plan/Interpretive Prospectus/Environmental Assessment* considers alternatives for resource preservation, interpretation, and economic revitalization in the town of Thurmond, West Virginia, a small community in the northern portion of New River Gorge National River. Thurmond has a significant history as one of the key railroad centers for shipping coal, freight, and passengers from the region on the C&O Railroad during the late 19th and 20th centuries. Although the town has declined in recent decades, it retains much of its historic character and reflects the period of its prominence. In addition, it preserves the only remaining major railroad resources within the national river. The town has relatively easy automobile access from West Virginia Route 25 and is still on the mainline of the C&O (now CSX) Railroad.

The 1982 *General Management Plan* for New River Gorge National River recommended that resource preservation and visitor use in Thurmond be limited to the depot, which would house a small visitor facility and museum describing railroading, commerce, coal mining, and local culture. However, subsequent documentation of the historic integrity and significance of Thurmond and its surroundings, acquisition of important cultural resources in the commercial area of town, and strong public interest in protecting the cultural heritage of the region and providing economic opportunities in the town have prompted the National Park Service to consider other alternatives. These alternatives propose preservation and interpretation of more of the town's resources, protection of the scenic and historic integrity of the area, and leasing or other arrangements for the town's remaining commercial buildings to stimulate economic growth and bring the town back to life. A high priority for all proposed activities and uses is to maintain Thurmond's character and historical setting.

Three alternatives are presented in this document to preserve, promote, and interpret Thurmond: A - limited interpretation of railroad history at the depot; B - historic period restoration and interpretation of the entire town; and C - preservation of the town and interpretation of its evolution over time. A fourth alternative (alternative D), which would involve emergency stabilization with no interpretation, has been included to describe the effects of taking no action in the town.

Alternative A, which is similar to the GMP proposal, would focus visitor activities at the Thurmond railroad depot and provide for limited access to the nearby railyard. The depot would contain interpretive media describing the area's significance in railroad history; the inaccessibility of the gorge and the town would be a key concept. All railroad and commercial buildings would be stabilized, but no interpretation or visitor services would be provided in the commercial area of town.

Alternatives B and C would both involve adaptive use of the historic buildings in the commercial area through lease or concession arrangement to contribute to the economic revitalization of the town. Alternative B would focus on the period from 1910 to 1930 when Thurmond was in its heyday, and all preservation, interpretation, and adaptive uses in the town would relate to that period. The objective would be to give visitors a sense of the town during its era of most intense activity. Alternative C would not highlight a particular period in Thurmond's history; rather, it would illustrate the significance of the town as part of the regional railroad network from 1873 to the present day. The stories of the coal-mining connection, the changes to the regional economy, and the effect of diesel trains on the railroad industry would be told, to place Thurmond in the larger context of the New River gorge and the C&O Railroad. Under both of these alternatives Thurmond would become a major destination within the national river.

Alternative C, the town's evolution over time, has been selected as the National Park Service's preferred alternative because it would provide the widest range of opportunities for resource protection, interpretation, and economic growth in the Thurmond area. Because this alternative would not limit restoration and allowable uses to a specific historic period, more aspects of the New River Gorge railroading story and Thurmond's lively history could be told and a greater number of compatible activities could take place in and around the town. This alternative would offer the best opportunity for revitalizing the community.

A number of proposals would be implemented under all of the action alternatives. These include confining acquisition to the lower (commercial and railyard) part of town; completing preservation treatments to protect all remaining structures in this area; installing protective fencing in the railyard to ensure visitor safety; establishing interpretive programs and media to reflect identified themes and goals; upgrading the Thurmond-Minden hiking trail and developing a new trail to Cunard; improving the portion of Route 25 between Glen Jean and Stone Cliff (the Thurmond access road); and developing park operations support facilities at Southside Junction across the river from Thurmond.

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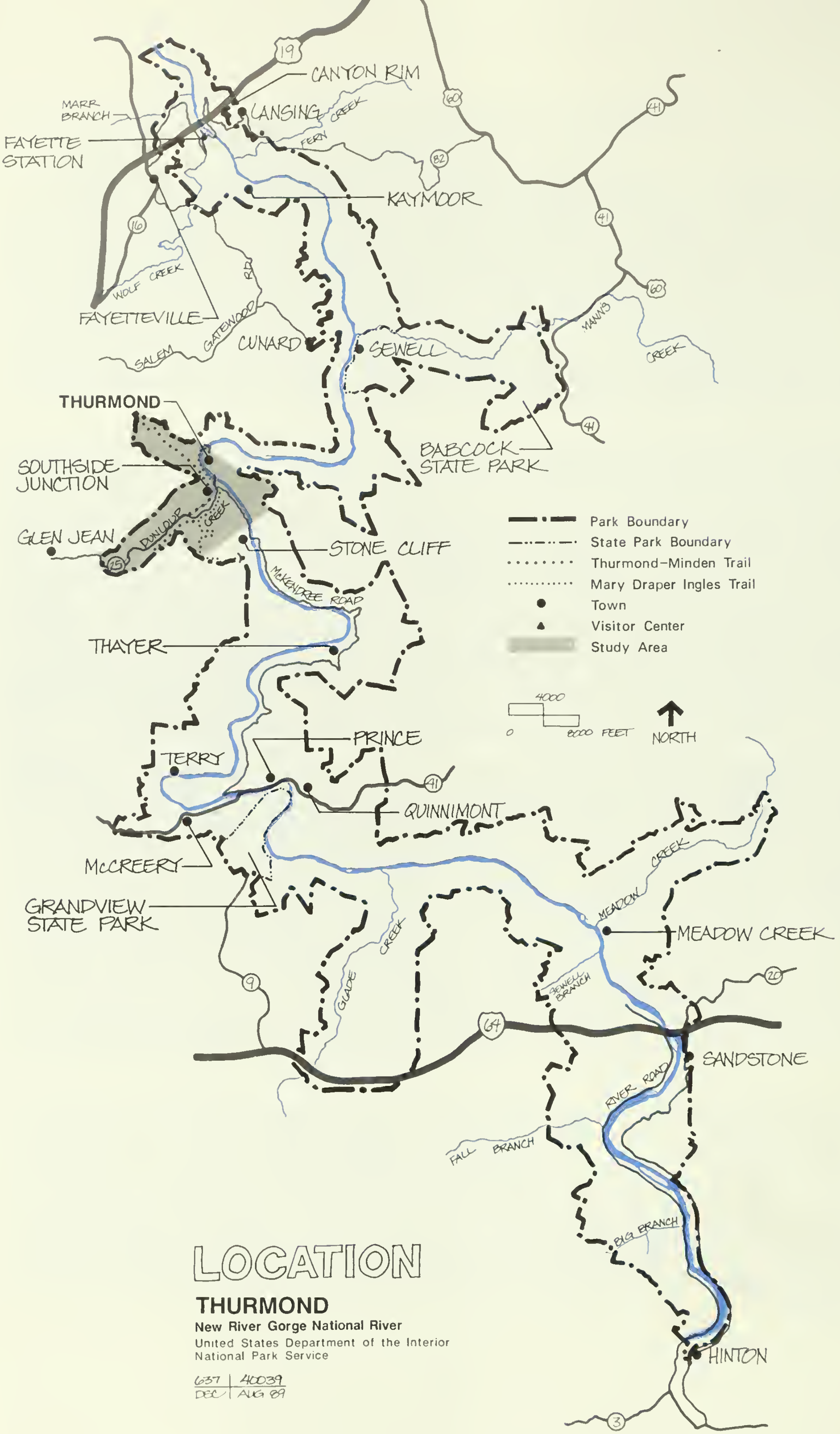
PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PLAN

This *Development Concept Plan/Interpretive Prospectus/Environmental Assessment* represents another step in the ongoing planning, management, and development of New River Gorge National River. The national river includes a portion of the New River and its narrow gorge as they traverse the Appalachian Mountains in southern West Virginia. The 50-mile long, 62,000-acre national river corridor, which runs from the town of Hinton in the south to just north of the US 19 bridge near Fayetteville, was created on November 10, 1978, by Public Law 95-625 "for the purpose of conserving and interpreting outstanding natural, scenic and historic values and objects in and around the New River Gorge and preserving as a free-flowing stream an important segment of the New River in West Virginia for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations."

This document examines alternatives for resource preservation, interpretation, and economic revitalization in the town of Thurmond, West Virginia, which lies in the Middle Gorge unit of the national river (see the Location and Planning Units maps). Thurmond has a significant history as one of the key railroad centers for shipping "smokeless coal" on the C&O Railroad during the late 19th and 20th centuries. At the peak of activity in this remote community, as many as 200 railroaders worked in the offices, railyard, and engine repair house, and Thurmond produced millions of dollars in freight and revenue annually. Although the town declined as a railroad hub with the introduction of diesel technology, it retains much of its historic character and reflects the period of its prominence. In addition, Thurmond contains the only remaining major railroad resources within the national river; the railroad yard in the town still contains the depot, engine house, sidings, and most of the yard structures from the historic era. Together, these resources provide a unique opportunity to interpret a historic railroad community within the New River Gorge.

The 1982 *General Management Plan* (GMP) for the national river identified Thurmond as a "prime historical site" and recommended that it be nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The Thurmond Historic District was placed on the register in January 1984 and listed at a level of state significance. The GMP proposed limited interpretation and use in the town; it recommended that a small visitor contact center with a museum describing railroading, commerce, nearby coal mining, and local culture be established in the Thurmond depot. However, subsequent documentation of the historic integrity and significance of Thurmond and its surroundings, acquisition of important cultural resources in the commercial area of town, and public interest in protecting the cultural heritage of the region have prompted the National Park Service to consider other alternatives involving preservation and interpretation of more of the town's resources and protection of the scenic and historic integrity of the area. A high priority for all proposed activities and uses in Thurmond is to maintain the character and historical setting of the town.

The Thurmond area today is a community of less than 50 residents, with few commercial services and limited economic opportunities. Such opportunities need to be created to restore the vitality of the town and benefit local residents and landowners. If the historic commercial area of Thurmond was revitalized through NPS and private action, many other businesses and services would be possible in the town and surrounding areas, including hotel or bed-and-breakfast accommodations; restaurants and snack shops; retail sales; a general store; offices; privately sponsored programs, classes, and demonstrations; nature and railroad photography; NPS programs and conferences; and other activities related to railroadiana.



LOCATION

THURMOND

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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The Thurmond area is one of the few locations along the river in the northern portion of the park that has relatively easy automobile access. The town is on the east bank of the New River opposite the point where West Virginia Route 25 reaches the river. A one-lane vehicle bridge attached to a railroad bridge provides access to Thurmond from Southside Junction, a small development on the west bank. From Southside Junction, Route 25 continues along the west bank of the river to Stone Cliff. In addition to its accessibility by car, Thurmond is on the mainline of the C&O Railroad (now the CSX Railroad) and is one of the few places in the national river where people can get close to trains traveling through and stopping in the gorge.

A number of visitor activities take place in the Thurmond vicinity. The area is one of the primary raft-launching sites on the New River; most of the 23 companies that are permitted to lead river excursions launch and take out in the Stone Cliff area. Both bank and boat fishing are good along this section of the river, and fishing boats also launch and take out in the area. Picnicking and primitive camping occur at Stone Cliff. A hiking trail has been established from near Thurmond to Minden, and the parkwide trail plan calls for additional trails in the area, including one along the railroad grade from Southside Junction to Cunard, 8 miles to the north. Because activities and uses in the Thurmond vicinity are so interrelated, this development concept plan also includes proposals for Southside Junction, the segment of Route 25 from Glen Jean to Thurmond and on to Stone Cliff, and the trails from Thurmond to Minden and Cunard.

The primary objectives and concerns to be addressed by the Thurmond plan are summarized below.

Planning Objectives

Protect the historic resources in Thurmond and the natural resources and scenic integrity of nearby areas within the gorge so that the history of railroading and the transportation of coal in the New River gorge can be interpreted to park visitors.

Provide opportunities to improve the economic viability of the town and surrounding area that will not adversely affect the integrity of the cultural landscape and significant resources.

Planning Concerns

Providing for visitor access and circulation, and creating safe separation from railroad operations

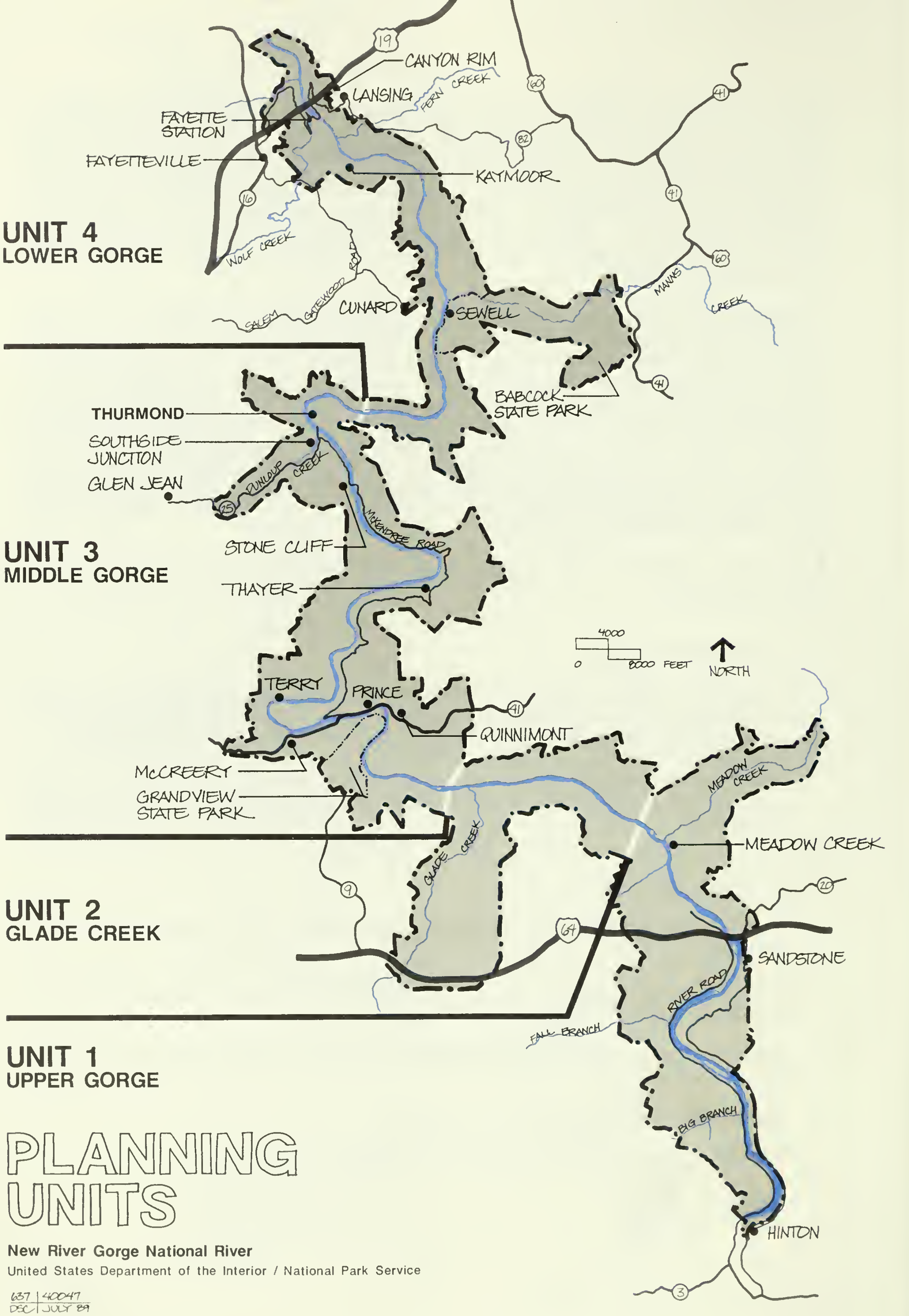
Determining the appropriate level of treatment and type of use for deteriorating historic buildings, bridges, and railroad yard features

Allowing changes while minimizing intrusions on the physical character of the town and the viewshed

Maintaining privacy and access for residents

Providing opportunities for economic enhancement

Deterring vandalism



PLANNING UNITS

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

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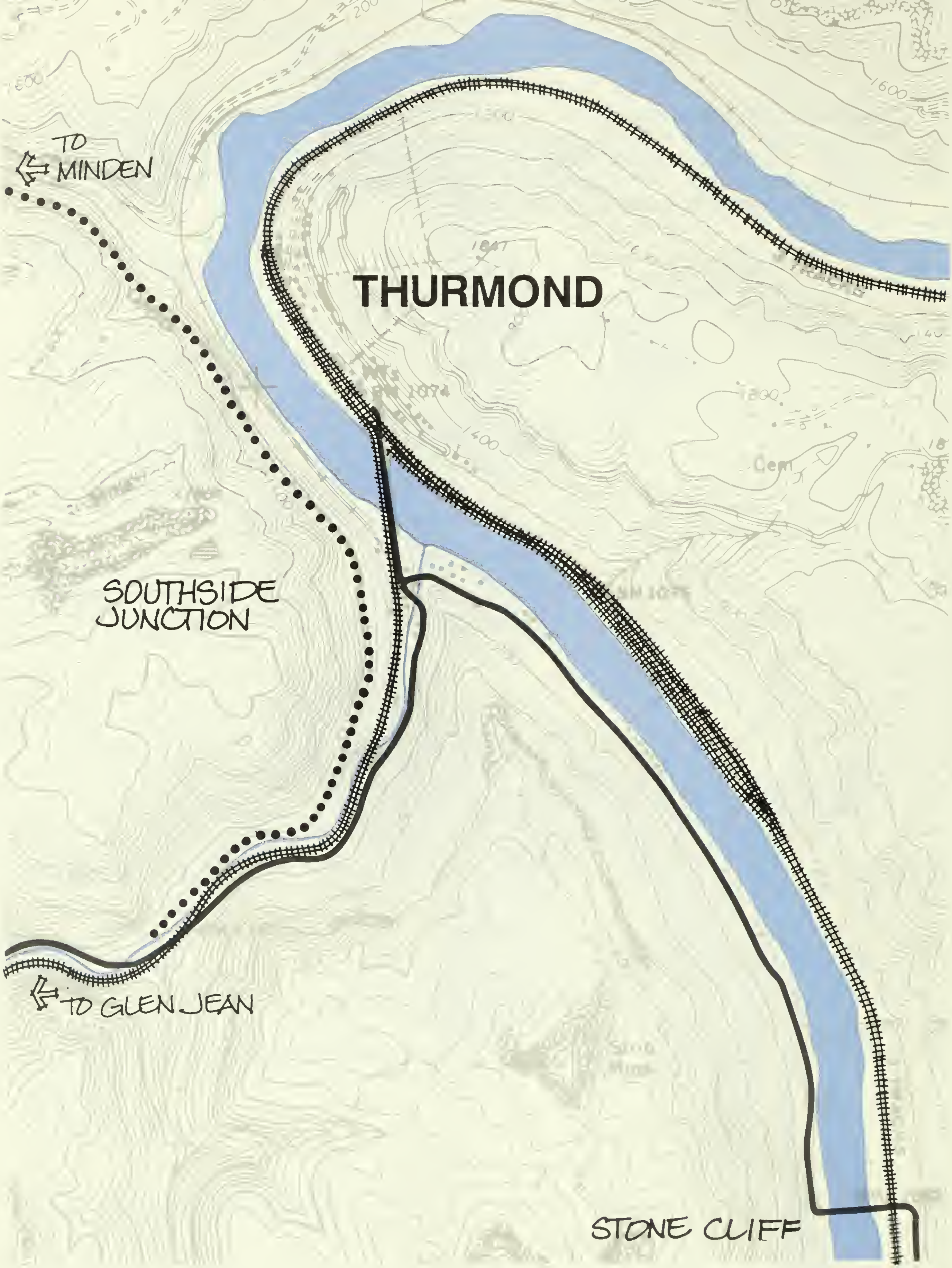
Following public and agency review and comment on this document, the proposed action will be selected and a final development concept plan/interpretive prospectus will be prepared. That document will direct resource preservation, visitor use, interpretation, and facility development in the Thurmond area in the future. Implementation of the final plan will require the necessary appropriations by Congress.



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STUDY AREA
THURMOND

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

CULTURAL RESOURCES

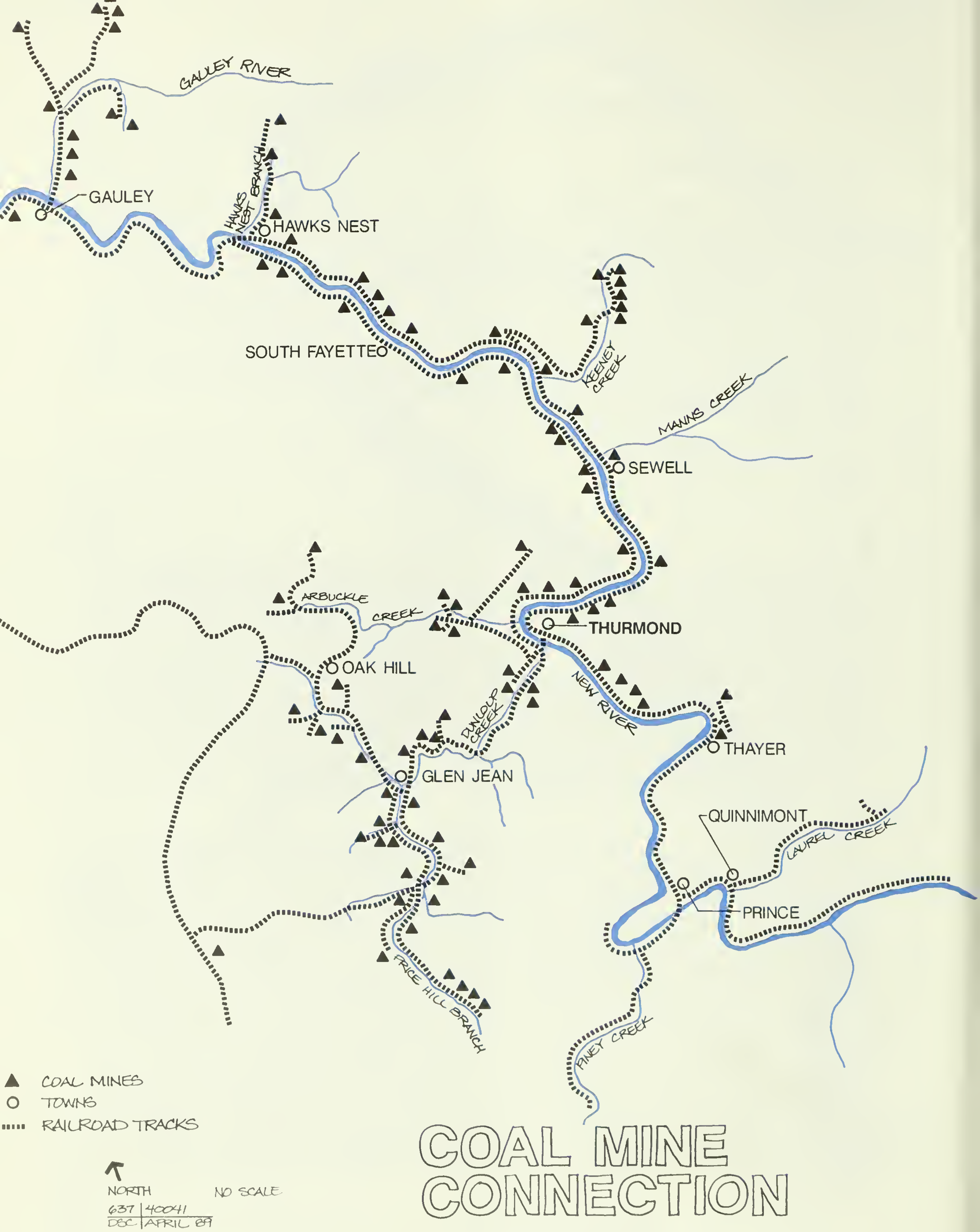
According to the National Register of Historic Places, "Thurmond, West Virginia, is historically significant for its extraordinary commercial vitality in the early twentieth century in spite of extreme Inaccessibility. For thirty-five years, Thurmond, located in the heart of the New River gorge, was inaccessible except by railroad. Yet, as the chief railroad center on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad serving portions of the fabled coal fields of southern West Virginia, Thurmond produced more tonnage and revenue than Cincinnati and Richmond combined. The town had not a single street, yet boasted two banks, two hotels and a thriving commercial block. Architecturally, the town is significant for its railroad architecture and for its vernacular worker housing and simple commercial buildings, not because they have great style or beauty, but for what they say about the thriving life in the West Virginia coal fields for some sixty years."

Following is a brief description of the history and resources of the town and surrounding areas.

History

The town of Thurmond, in Fayette County, was named for William Dabney Thurmond, who acquired the property in 1873, the year the C&0 Railroad completed its mainline through the New River gorge. A single house stood on the site when the railroad bridge was built in 1888-1889 just east of Thurmond's property, offering access to the opposite side of the New River. Appropriate development followed, including passenger and freight depots, an engine repair house, marshalling yards, water tanks and columns, and associated steam-era support structures. All available flat land in Thurmond was used for the railyard. Hotels, apartment houses, private homes, stores, offices, banks, and a restaurant were built nearby, and Thurmond soon became a thriving rail center. On the west side of the river, coal baron Thomas G. McKell built a 100-room resort hotel, the Dun Glen. Gambling, violence, and sex flourished in the McKell saloons while the town of Thurmond itself remained "respectable" under William Thurmond's control.

During the boom years of 1910 to 1930 Thurmond handled passenger traffic, but more importantly it shipped "smokeless" coal mined in the famous New River fields. This high-quality coal was a clean, hot-burning fuel with little sulphur and low ash. As a result, it was in high demand during America's age of steam to power factories and engines. Coal and coke production was a major industry in Fayette County; as early as 1888 the county was producing over 1 million tons to ship to the outside world. The presence of the C&O Railroad in the gorge promoted the establishment and growth of coal and lumber towns, all of which relied on the railroad for transportation and shipping access. The operations at Thurmond were the key to the railroad's success in the New River coal area. The town was in an advantageous position because it could be reached by bridge from the west side of the gorge; coal cars could be brought directly down Arbuckle and Dunloup creeks through Southside Junction and straight into town, where they could be attached to the C&O trains. By the turn of the century Thurmond was the main point where coal from the surrounding area was shipped out of the gorge. In 1904 it was fourth in total receipts on the railroad; in 1910 it produced nearly $5 million in freight and passenger revenue. All movement in and out of Thurmond was by railroad; an automobile road did not reach the town until 1921. Even now there is no through street in Thurmond, and the railroad serves as "main street."



COAL MINE CONNECTION

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

Thurmond's significance as a revenue producer declined in the 1930s because of mechanization, the depression, and other factors. This was accompanied by the closing of commercial services and the 1930 burning of the Dun Glen Hotel. Not until diesel replaced steam engines, however, did Thurmond completely lose its importance as a center of railroad activity. The C&O held onto steam longer than any other railroad since it was the world's largest hauler of coal, but finally in 1949 the company ordered 146 diesel engines. When the last steam engine was retired in the New River gorge, the era of steam and coal mining as a major industry was all but over.

Description of Resources

Thurmond's physical setting was the largest determinant of its appearance and significance. The New River gorge is a steep inaccessible valley cut by the New River, and Thurmond's C&O Railroad yards and commercial district were built on a narrow strip of land above the river. The placement of the marshalling yards, coal and sanding towers, water towers, engine house, and depots on the available flat land was dictated by efficiency and function. The commercial district logically developed near the depot and tracks to serve pedestrian traffic from the railroad. The residential section was built farther up the gorge hillside. Passengers arriving in Thurmond on the train – the only access until the 1920s – had short walks to the commercial buildings, the hillside homes, and the magnificent Dun Glen Hotel on the opposite side of the river. Every service Thurmond had to offer was accessible by foot because of the closeness of the town's physical layout.

As an industrial town, Thurmond's architecture was "built for practical commercial or residential use and lack[ed] embellishments or significant stylistic features" (NPS 1983). Only three or four housing types remain, adapted to the steep terrain. Thurmond's present-day appearance belies its past as a bustling community, but it has retained its scenic charm and historical integrity as one of the few existing New River Gorge towns.

The Thurmond Historic District contains 16 railroad, commercial, and residential structures with high historical integrity and significance. Another 29 structures and sites contribute to the historic district's character. The two structures at Southside Junction that are listed as intrusions in the district have, since the date of the designation, been removed by their owner.

The significant railroad structures include the passenger depot, the engine house, the coaling tower, the bridge, and two water tanks. The depot (1904) is a two-story rectangular wood frame structure that served passengers and later baggage and freight as well. In the engine house (1905 with a 1921 addition), a wooden rectangular-shaped building with two outshoot additions, locomotives underwent "light repair" and inspection. The reinforced concrete coaling tower (1922), together with a nearby sand drying and blowing house, serviced the engines with coal and sand. In 1889-1890 a triple-span iron truss railroad bridge with stone piers was built across the New River at Thurmond; it was strengthened in 1915, and the automobile lane was rebuilt in the 1980s. The steel water tanks (1914, 1927) were necessary for supplying water to the steam locomotives. The significant commercial buildings are located next to the railroad tracks and are visually part of the railyard. These include the Mankin-Cox Building (1904), a three-story brick building that housed doctor and pharmacist offices and later the New River Banking and Trust Company; the Goodwin-Kincaid Building (1906), now in ruins except for four exterior walls of cut limestone, which once housed a restaurant, clothing stores, a doctor's office, and apartments; and the National Bank of Thurmond (1917), a four-story brick building that housed the bank founded by William Thurmond, the Western Union Telegraph Company offices, and living quarters.

Significant buildings and features of Thurmond that have been lost due to fire or demolished include the freight depot, railroad employee bunkhouse, two turntables, Lafayette Hotel, and the Armour meatpacking building.

Except for foundations and railroad tracks, most of the historic features in Southside Junction have been lost.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Thurmond sits on the east side and approximately 80 feet above the New River in the center of a large meander; Southside Junction is directly across the river on the west side. The study area covers approximately 7 acres on the west side of the river and 5 acres on the east side.

Vegetation

The vegetation on both sides of the river within and surrounding the town of Thurmond is a mixed mesophytic forest (Braun 1950) characterized by a relatively dense growth of trees and shrubs. The largest tree species are red and white oaks, basswood, sugar maple, sycamore, and hickory. Elm and sweet gum species are found at the river's edge, along with dogwood, witch hazel, and redbud. Jewel weed, poison ivy, stinging nettle, wild blackberry, and thimbleberry are the primary herbaceous flora.

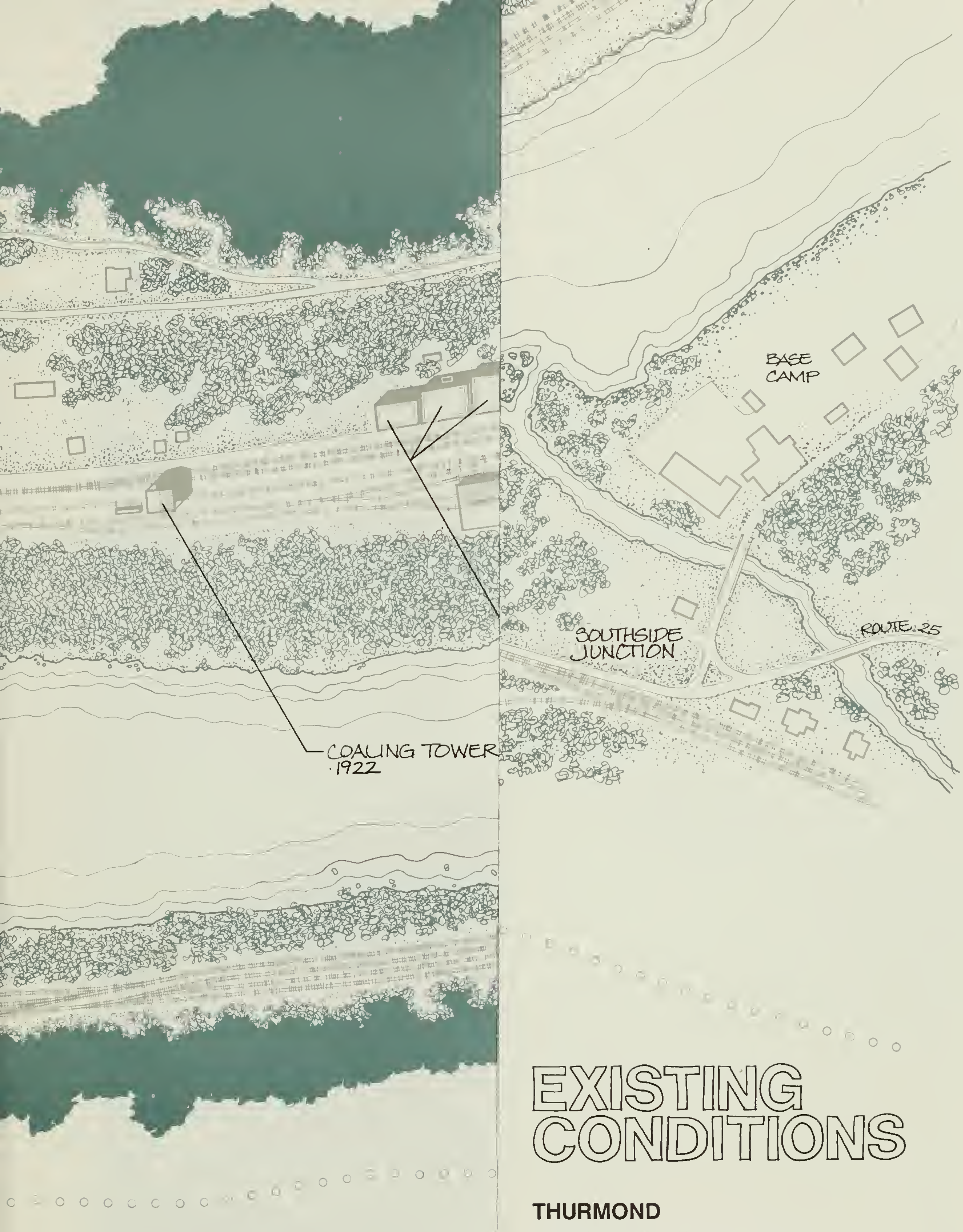
Kudzu, an exotic species from Asia, has invaded many of the disturbed areas in New River Gorge. It is prevalent on the east side of the river, growing in and around the town of Thurmond.

Two federally listed endangered or threatened species occur in New River Gorge – running buffalo clover (*Trifolium stoloniferum*) and Virginia spirea (*Spirea virginianus*). One species found in the park – Steel's meadowrue (*Thalictrum steeleanum*) – is listed under category 2, which means that it is being considered as an addition to the federal list of threatened and endangered species.

The state of West Virginia does not maintain a legally designated list of rare or endangered species; however, the state Department of Natural Resources does maintain a list of species of special concern. This list is maintained under the West Virginia natural heritage program. In addition, to the species on the federal list and in category 2, the state recognizes mountain bittercress (*Cardamine clematitis*) and *Cardamine flagillifera* as rare plants. Both are endemic to the southern Appalachians and reach their northern limits in West Virginia.

Floodplains and Wetlands

The railroad tracks delineate the 100-year floodplain for the town of Thurmond. On the east side of the river, everything lying to the east of the tracks is outside the floodplain, while everything to the west of the tracks is inside the floodplain. Historic structures in the floodplain include the depot, the engine house, the coaling tower, and many of the railroad yard features. Most of these structures are, however, at the same elevation as buildings outside the floodplain.

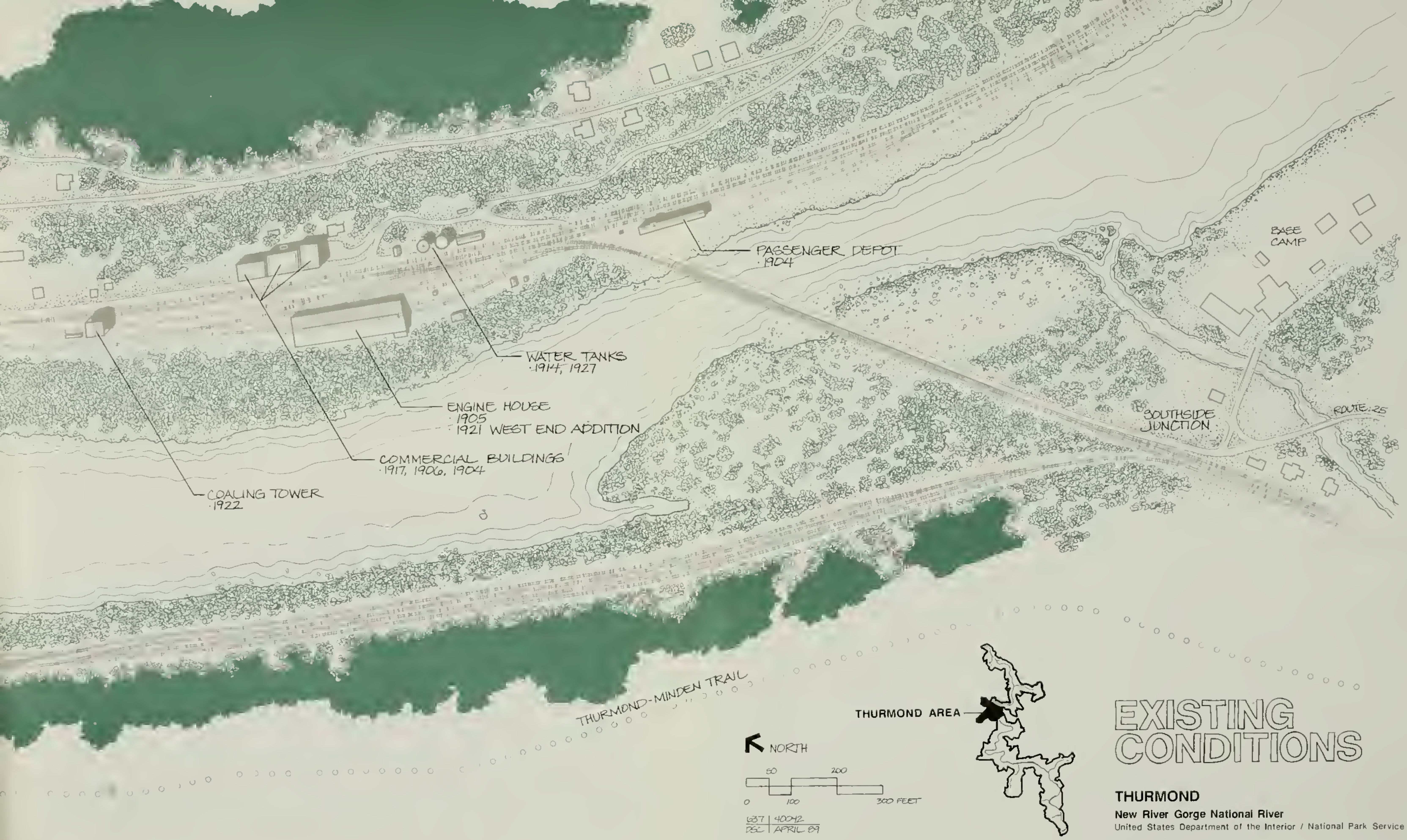


EXISTING CONDITIONS

THURMOND

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

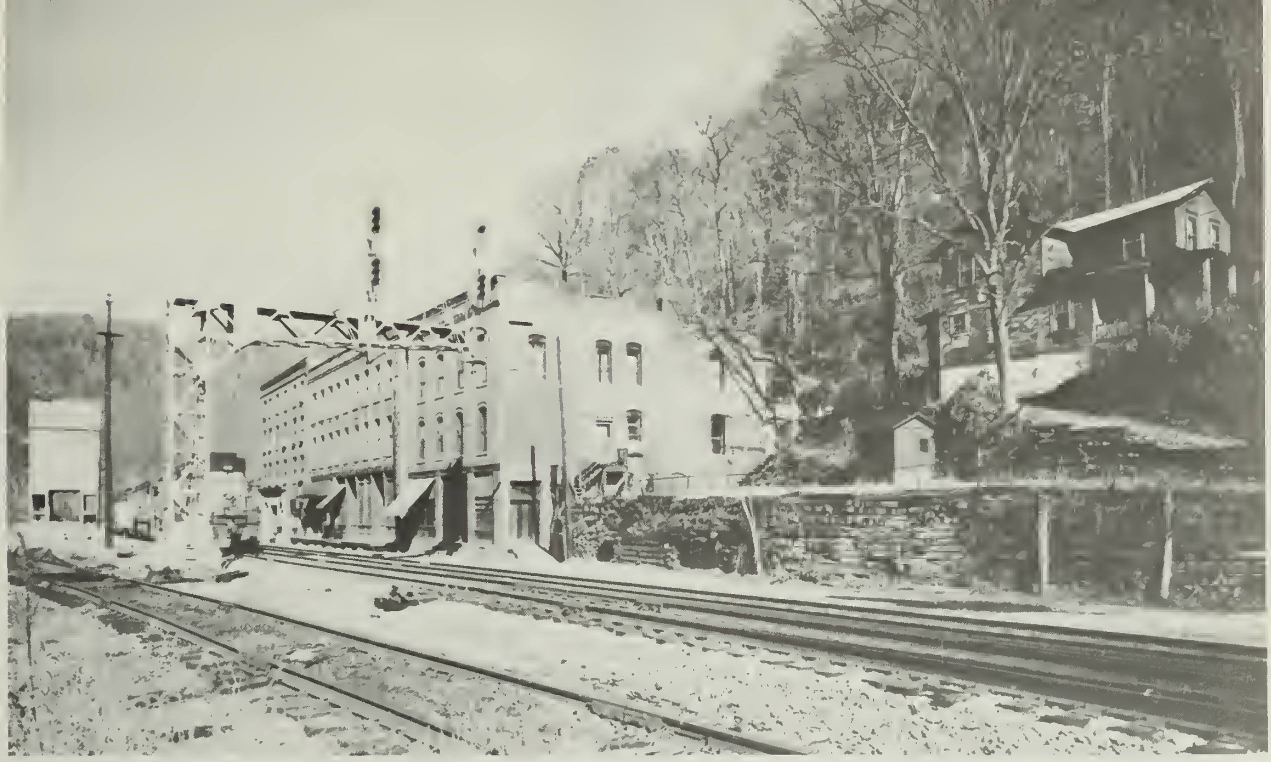


EXISTING CONDITIONS

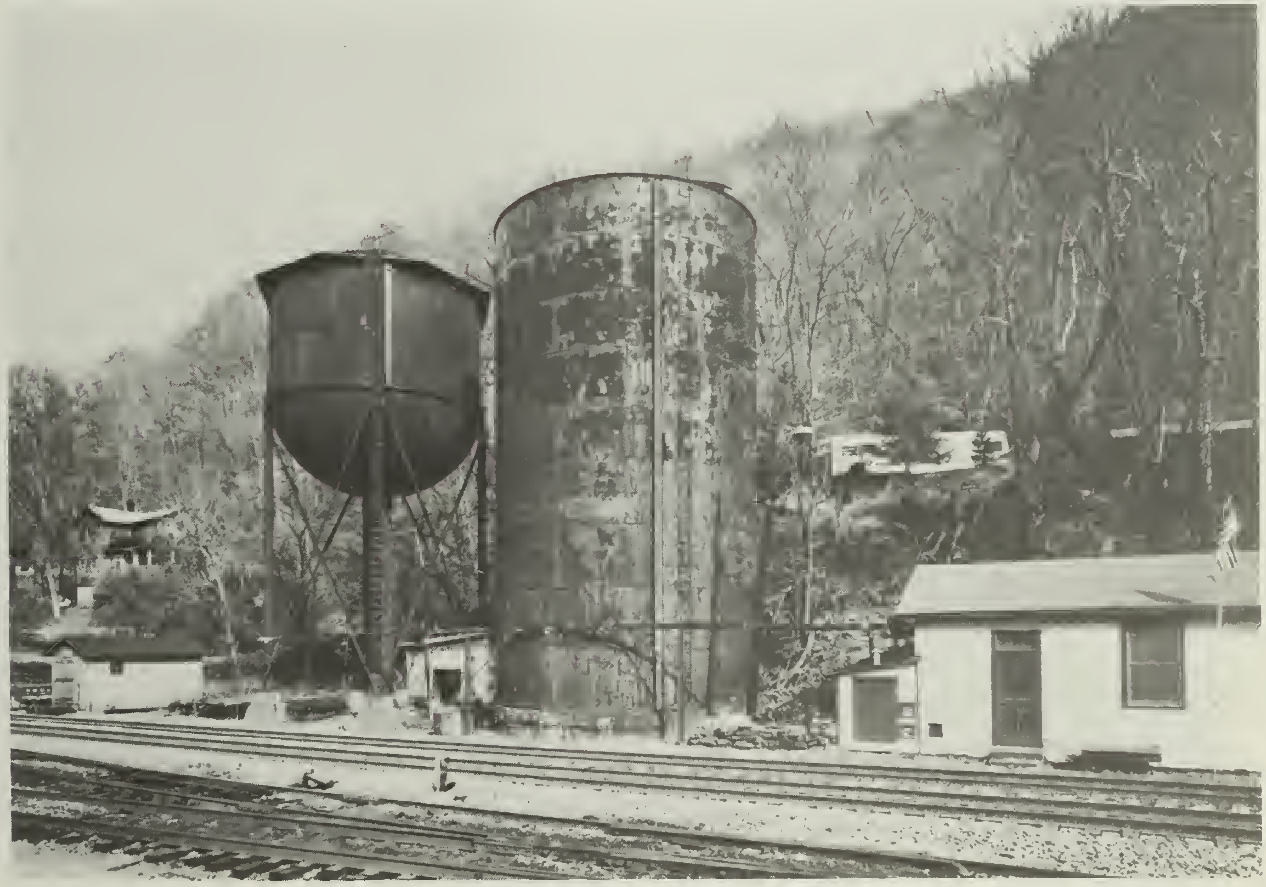
THURMOND

New River Gorge National River

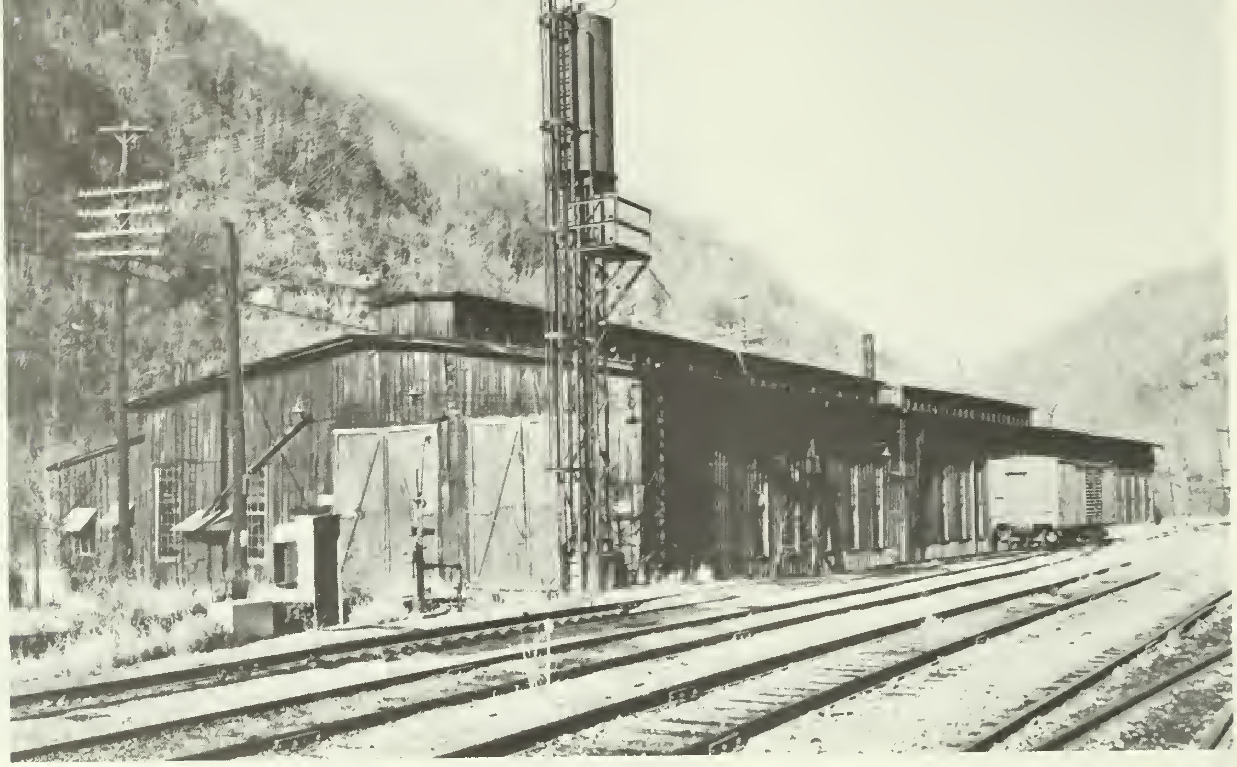
United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service



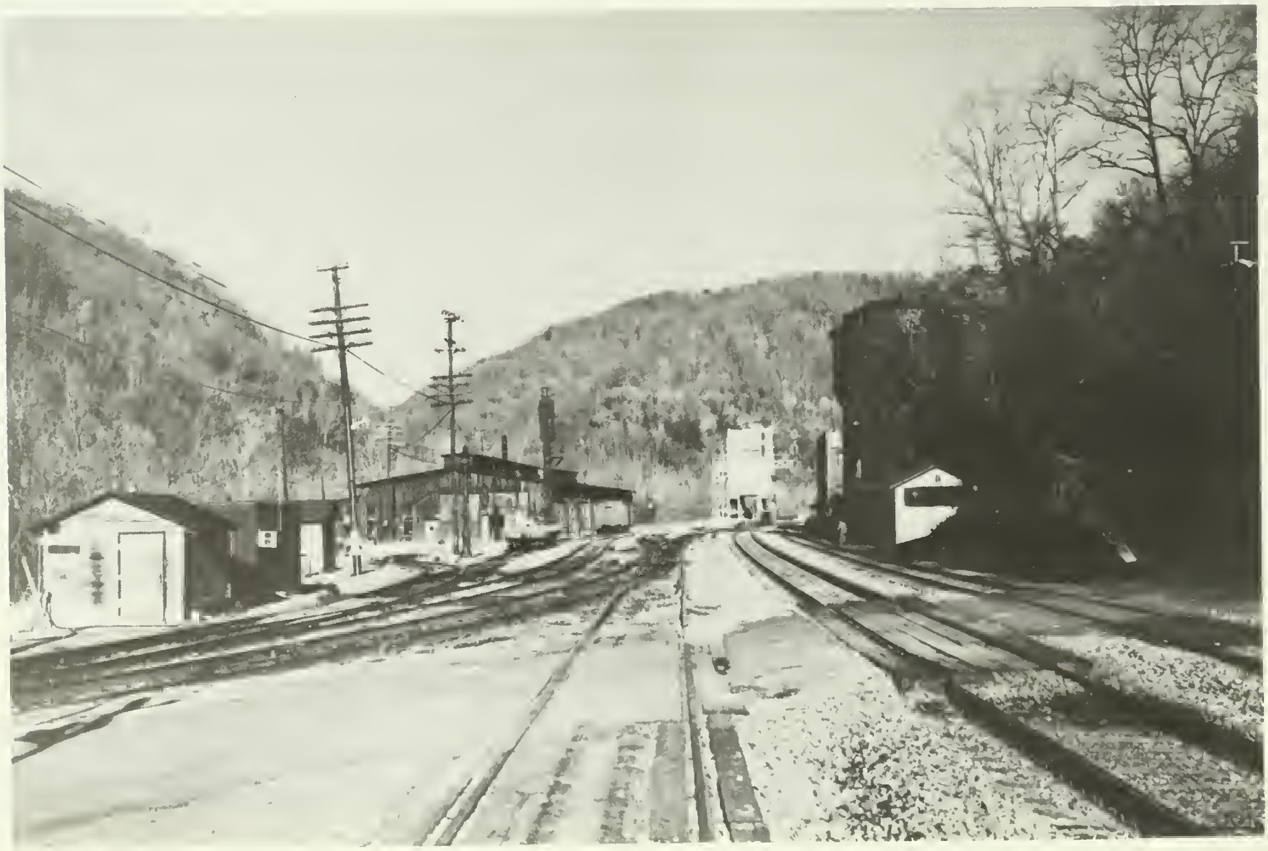
Commercial buildings, coaling tower, and C&O mainline



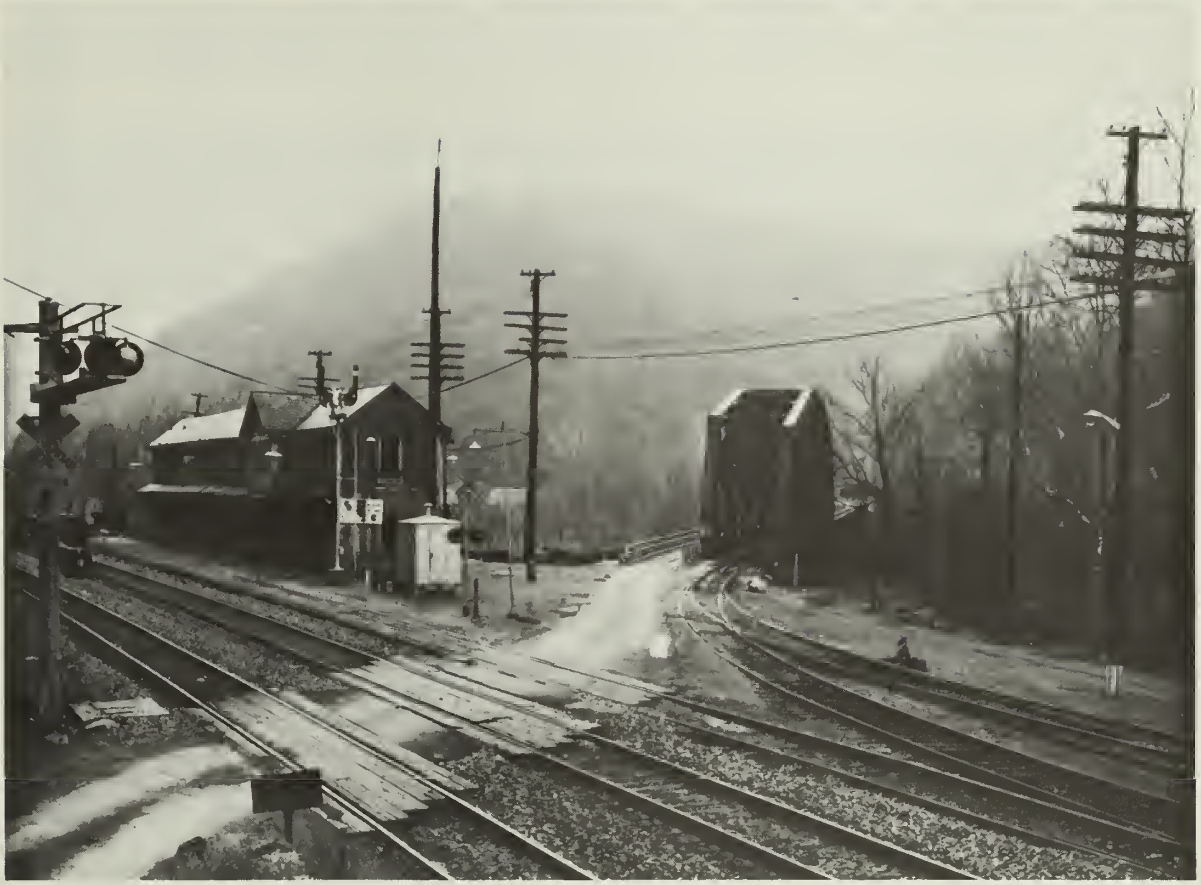
Water tanks, post office and C&O mainline



Engine house



View from depot toward engine house and commercial buildings



Depot, bridge, and road crossing of C&O mainline

On the west side of the river some of the visitor and operations facilities are located within the 100-year floodplain. The trail from Southside Junction to Cunard is at the floodplain elevation. The base camp is within the floodplain, but many of the structures on the site were constructed by the former owner to withstand flooding.

There are no known wetlands within the study area.

Fisheries

The New River and its tributaries comprise the largest and most significant warm water fishery in the state of West Virginia. Most of the river, including the area around Thurmond, possesses good instream and riparian cover, which contributes to quality fish habitat. The New River supports and maintains game fish populations of largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, catfish, rock bass, muskellunge, walleye, crappie, sunfish, and spotted bass. The entire river is identified as existing or potential spawning grounds. A total of 58 species of fish have been identified in New River, with five considered endemic: big mouth chub, New River shiner, kanawha minnow, kanawha darter, and finescale saddle darter.

The West Virginia Department of Natural Resources stocks adult trout in six streams located within New River Gorge. One of those streams, Dunloup Creek, is located within the study area. This stocking program will continue.

Wildlife

Generally the forests support healthy populations of wildlife. In wooded habitats whitetailed deer, gray squirrels, fox squirrels, raccoons, opossums, skunks, foxes, and various small rodents are the most common mammals. Black bears have been sighted. Open lands support groundhogs, rabbits, and other common animals. Streamsides provide habitat for muskrats, mink, and beavers. Four endangered species may occur within New River Gorge: peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), Virginia big eared bat (*Plecotus townsendii virginianus*), and bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). Three species are listed under category 2, which means that they are being reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and considered as additions to the federal list of threatened and endangered species: eastern small-footed bat (*Myotis subulatus leibii*), southeastern big eared bat (*Plecotus rafinesquei*), and wood rat (*Neotoma floridana magister)*. None of these species are known to occur in the study area; however, it is possible that some of the peregrine falcons that have been reintroduced into the gorge are feeding on the many pigeons nesting in the abandoned buildings and the railroad bridge.

VISITOR USE AND RECREATION

The majority of visitors to the Thurmond/Southside Junction area come to raft the river with one of the rafting companies operating in the gorge. Thurmond is visited by only a small percentage of visitors to New River Gorge, primarily people interested in railroads who have found out about the town. Until the recent sale of the Banker's Club (National Bank of Thurmond) and the other commercial buildings on Thurmond's "main street," visitors came to Thurmond to stay overnight or enjoy a meal.

Fishing in Dunloup Creek and along the New River from Southside Junction to Stone Cliff is a popular recreational pursuit for local residents and those visitors who know of the fishing opportunities along this stretch of river. Both bank and boat fishing occur in the study area; boat fishing occurs mostly north of the Thurmond bridge.

Public river access and minimal facilities are currently available at Stone Cliff. Commercial outfitters launch rafting trips from Stone Cliff and from private properties between Southside Junction and Stone Cliff.

The Thurmond/Minden trail offers hiking opportunities for local residents and visitors. It is approximately 3 miles long and extends from the trailhead parking area off Route 25 just outside Southside Junction to the town of Minden. The town of Thurmond can be viewed from several places along this trail. The trail follows an old railroad spur that was used to haul coal in the early 1900s. Part of this section of trail has been designated as the Mary Ingles Trail by a local trail club named in her honor. Mary Ingles was a pioneer who was captured by the Shawnee Indians in 1755. She escaped and according to historical accounts returned from Ohio to Blacksburg, Virginia, through the New River gorge. Near Arbuckle Creek the extension of the Mary Ingles Trail leaves the railroad grade and winds down a steep slope to the Cunard trail corridor along the river.

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

Most new development has occurred along the river between Southside Junction and Stone Cliff. Structures there vary from modern buildings to older, small seasonal use cabins, most made of natural materials. An area known as the base camp is the primary developed area along the road. It consists of eight major structures, two picnic shelters, parking areas, a boat-launching ramp, and utilities.

LANDOWNERSHIP

The Minden trail and trailhead parking are available for visitor use. The base camp site will remain in private use through the winter of 1990-1991 as part of the sale agreement for that property. Three commercial buildings and two houses in Thurmond have recently been acquired by the National Park Service. Negotiations with the CSX Corporation for the railroad grade at Southside Junction have been finalized and discussions on the railroad structures and land in Thurmond are underway.

ALTERNATIVES

The primary purpose of resource protection and visitor use at Thurmond is to preserve, promote, and evoke a sense of the historic railroad community that once thrived here. Viewed from across the New River, or approached on foot from the railroad bridge, Thurmond appears to be "lost in time" because of its rural, secluded location. Preservation efforts can be instituted and activities can be introduced into the town that will both re-create its historical character and bring the town back to life. Within this enlivened setting visitors can learn firsthand about the history of railroading and the transportation of coal within the New River gorge and can experience the sights, sounds, and activities that supported this significant industry.

Three alternatives are presented in this section to preserve, promote, and interpret Thurmond: A - limited interpretation of railroad history at the depot (the concept proposed in the *General Management Plan*); B - historic period restoration and interpretation of the entire town; and C - preservation of the town and interpretation of its evolution over time. Alternatives B and C would also involve adaptive use of the historic buildings in the commercial area through lease or concession arrangement to contribute to the economic revitalization of the town. A fourth alternative (alternative D), which would entail emergency stabilization with no interpretation, has been included to show the effects of taking no action in the town.

Alternatives A-C share a number of common actions, which are described below.

ACTIONS COMMON TO ALTERNATIVES A-C

Land Protection

Landownership by the National Park Service on the east side of the river would be confined to the lower town: defined as the railroad buildings, yard, and features, and the commercial buildings adjacent to the railroad tracks. It is not an objective of the National Park Service to acquire the residential section of town. CSX is not currently interested in selling the coaling tower or the Dunloup branch line. These and additional parcels adjacent to the lower town might be acquired in the future, but only on a willing seller/willing buyer basis. The probable existence of hazardous materials in the railroad structures, particularly the engine house, might affect the National Park Service's ability to acquire, use, and interpret these structures.

On the west side of the river the National Park Service currently owns includes the Southside Junction railroad property and the base camp. Additional properties might be acquired, but only on a willing seller/willing buyer basis.

Resource Protection

Because of their contribution to the character and integrity of the historic scene, all existing railroad and commercial buildings, railroad yard features, tracks, and other historic structures in Thurmond would be protected. The levels of protection, treatments, and types of allowable activities for specific parcels and buildings would be different under each alternative.

To prevent the loss of significant resources, buildings in downtown Thurmond that are deteriorated and unsafe would receive emergency stabilization to reestablish weather-resistant enclosures and structural stability. Any treatments of historic buildings beyond this emergency work would be guided by historic structure reports to be prepared for the buildings.

Protective Fencing of the Mainline Railroad Tracks

In alternatives A-C, protective fences and crossing gates would be installed along the railroad tracks to ensure visitor safety and to address CSX concerns regarding the continued use of their property. The fences and gates would be 4 feet tall and made out of black, heavy aluminum, resembling wrought iron. They would be modern intrusions on the historic scene, but they would be similar in design to historic fences at other railroad areas. On the west side of the mainline tracks, the fencing would extend from just south of the depot to the engine house (alternative A) or the coaling tower (alternatives B and C). On the east side of the tracks, the fencing would enclose the road crossing across from the depot and continue to the coaling tower (alternatives B and C). No pedestrian access would be allowed between the water tanks/post office and the mainline railroad tracks. CSX and the West Virginia Department of Highways would be consulted on the design and development of road and railroad crossing requirements and controls. Agreements between the National Park Service and CSX regarding rights-of-way and access through NPS property for railroad operations and through CSX property for pedestrian access, visitor use, and park operations would be necessary.

Interpretation

The New River Gorge National River headquarters has been constructed in the town of Glen Jean, which is approximately 6.2 miles southwest of Thurmond. Because visitor orientation and information about the entire national river and its attractions would be available in this town – and most visitors to Thurmond would pass through it – orientation and information services at Thurmond would be minimal and interpretation would focus on the history and significance of the town.

Interpretive programs and exhibits would reflect the following interpretive themes and goals:

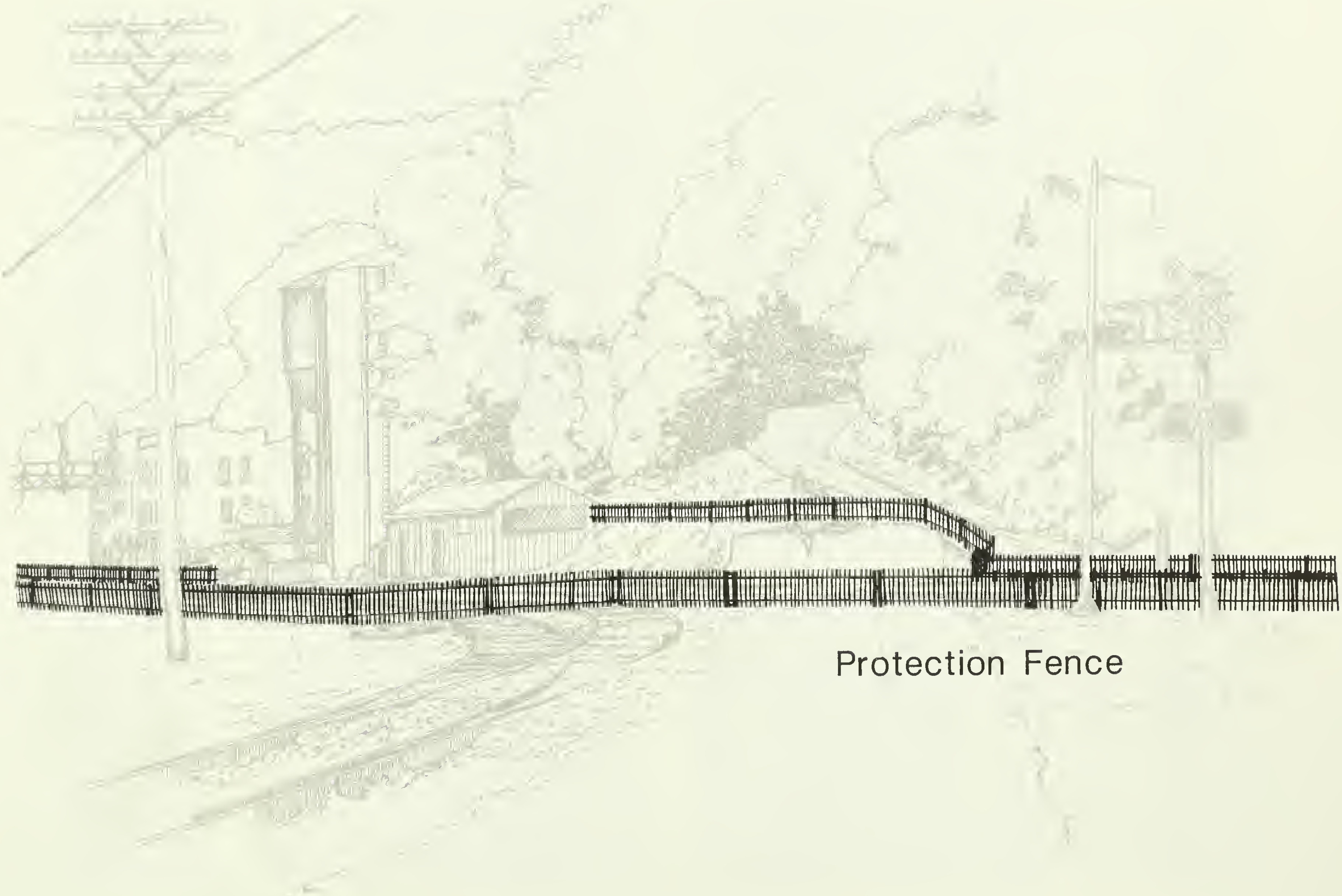
Theme: New River Gorge National River today represents a change in America's values and the perception of wildlands over the last 200 years – from that of wilderness as a barrier to human progress to that of wildlands for inspiration and recreation.

Goals: Visitors would learn about the sequence of settlement and use in the New River gorge that illustrates the changes in attitudes over time.

Theme: The New River gorge exemplifies the rapid industrialization of America at the turn of the 20th century. This industrialization prompted major man-made changes in the gorge's ecosystem and the appearance of the landscape.

Goals: Visitors would understand the role played by the New River gorge in the industrialization of America.

Visitors would also learn how industry changed the gorge landscape.


Protection Fence

Visitors would understand why industry vanished from the New River gorge.

Visitors would understand that the industrial story in the gorge is representative of what happened elsewhere in America.

Theme: The character of the New River and its gorge has resulted in significant biological and cultural diversity that is well-illustrated in the park.

Goals: Visitors would learn that the nature of the New River gorge allowed both biological and cultural diversity to occur.

Economic Opportunities

The commercial buildings in Thurmond would be made available to private enterprises under the historic leasing program or concession agreements. This would provide opportunities for the improvement of economic conditions within the town and surrounding area. Historic structure reports would be completed for all NPS-owned historic structures within the district that were eligible for lease or concession before their treatment and use. Specific requirements for the protection of these structures would be included in the agreements between the NPS and the lessee or concessioner. The scope of activities to be permitted in these structures and their immediate surroundings would also be part of the agreements.

Surrounding communities such as Glen Jean, Harvey, and Red Star could experience indirect economic benefits as a result of the increased visitor use in Thurmond. These communities would be encouraged through technical and other assistance to investigate the availability of grants and other methods for promoting their economic growth.

Continued Railroad Use of Depot

The passenger depot would continue to be a stop for Amtrak. The depot and town might also be a designated stop along a Middle Gorge unit driving tour.

Design Considerations

Design options would be limited by steep slopes, narrow flat land, limited access to and through land along the river, remoteness from major highways and services, and lack of utility systems and places to site them. They would also be constrained by the objective of maintaining the character and existing quality of Thurmond's viewshed. Thurmond's character is defined by several factors, including

the functional organization of buildings and railroad facilities
the lack of modern intrusions
the historic integrity of the structures and setting
CSX's continuing use of the mainline tracks
the pedestrian scale of the built environment
Thurmond's historical and physical context within the New River gorge

The historic integrity of the railroad and commercial buildings and structures in Thurmond is high. All are located on their original sites, many maintained their historic functions until recently, and all are rich in vernacular architectural detail. Protective measures would be implemented in a timely manner to arrest further deterioration of these important resources. Each building's historic character, integrity, and condition would be preserved to the extent possible when any new development, including safety features and utilities, was necessary in the historic district.

Economic growth in Thurmond would have an impact on the character of the town. The acceptable level of change under the selected alternative would be determined, and the amount of impact controlled, so that Thurmond's significant qualities would not be compromised. Resources would be made available for commercial use, but with precautions to minimize impacts on the town. Contemporary automobiles would be distracting at best. These and other potentially intrusive elements, including parking facilities, new utilities, new buildings, and nonhistoric uses of historic structures would be carefully controlled. The National Park Service would work closely with local residents in developing water and sewer systems that meet both interests' needs.

New development needed to support activities in the Thurmond Historic District and surrounding area would occur in the Southside Junction/base camp area. Except for the railroad bridge and the foundations and brick walls of the Dun Glen Hotel, the west side of the river does not retain any historic elements; therefore, new development could be placed here without adversely affecting the district. This site would also provide an appropriate transition area for entry into historic Thurmond. Existing facilities at the base camp could be used for park operations and limited public activities.

Handicapped access would be included in the design and development of all new facilities.

Trail Development

The existing Thurmond-Minden hiking trail between Route 25 near Southside Junction and the town of Minden would continue to be maintained by the National Park Service. Wayside exhibits and viewpoints overlooking Thurmond would be developed to interpret the town and the gorge for hikers. Bridges on the trail would be improved or replaced.

As part of the parkwide trail plan, a multipurpose trail would be developed on the abandoned railroad grade from Southside Junction to the railroad bridge near Cunard.

Improvement of Route 25

West Virginia Route 25 was identified in the GMP as a visual corridor of special concern that should be protected. Within this context, it would be the state's responsibility to improve Route 25 between Glen Jean and Stone Cliff and to replace the narrow one-lane bridges, as recommended by the Federal Highway Administration, while protecting the road's visual qualities. Cooperative efforts would be agreed upon by the state and the National Park Service for maintenance of this road. The intersection of roads at Southside Junction would be improved to direct traffic to appropriate areas.

Development of Support Facilities at the Base Camp

Park operations to support activities at Thurmond and Southside Junction would be at the base camp. Support facilities would include offices for national river staff, storage for equipment and supplies needed for site maintenance and river rescue and patrol, trailhead parking (alternative A only), seasonal and/or permanent staff housing, and a general store catering to local recreationists. Limited public access for bank fishing and group picnicking might be allowed at the base camp.

Compliance

Consultation with the West Virginia state historic preservation officer regarding the alternative actions considered in this plan will be necessary even though the *General Management Plan* for New River Gorge National River is covered by a programmatic memorandum of agreement. The GMP proposal has been expanded to include the engine house and commercial buildings in alternative A, and new proposals are offered for consideration in alternatives B and C. Most of the actions considered for Southside Junction and Route 25 and all of the actions considered for Stone Cliff were included in the *General Management Plan*. Archeological evaluations would be necessary before development could occur. Any development at the base camp should consider possible effects on the remains of the Dun Glen Hotel and requirements for archeological evaluations.

Surveys for rare plants at Thurmond and Southside Junction have been completed. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources has occurred. No rare, threatened, or endangered species (federal or state) have been found in the study area.

ALTERNATIVE A: GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN PROPOSAL

Concept

This alternative would focus visitor activities at the Thurmond railroad depot and provide for limited access to the nearby railyard. The depot would contain interpretive media describing the area's significance in railroad history; the inaccessibility of the gorge and the town would be a key concept. All railroad and commercial buildings would be stabilized, but no interpretation or visitor services would be provided in the commercial area of town. Thurmond would not be a major destination point within the national river.

Alternative A most closely resembles the proposal approved in the 1982 *General Management Plan* and is considered the minimum action alternative.

Visitor Experience

Most visitor activities would occur inside and near the depot. Visitors would receive a quick orientation to the town by studying waysides on an outside viewing platform, touring a small museum in the depot, and walking through a fenced-in area between the depot and the engine house. Since they would only be directed to areas on the river side of the railroad tracks, they would get a glimpse of the town, but they would not be directed to walk through or experience it.

Actions

Access. Visitors would enter Thurmond in their own vehicles. Two small parking areas with space for 26 single vehicles would be constructed adjacent to the depot and the Dunloup branch line – a location that historically has been used for parking. The railroad bridge has a 12-ton load limit, which would restrict large vehicles. School buses would continue to pick up and deliver students near the depot.

The base camp at Southside Junction would provide trailhead parking for the railroad grade trail to Cunard. Road realignment and improvements on Route 25 and at the intersection at the junction would be completed.

Resource Protection and Interpretation. All railroad and commercial buildings would be purchased by the National Park Service. These structures would be stabilized, and their facades protected, to preserve the historic scene.

The depot would be stabilized and painted, and two rooms in the building would be adaptively used as a museum. A small staff restroom would be provided in the depot. An outside viewing platform would be constructed just above grade, which would include exhibits with photographs to show the historic appearance of Thurmond.

The engine house would be stabilized and its exterior painted; the interior of this building would not be used for interpretation. The last remaining water column, shanties, tracks, and other yard features in the fenced area between the depot and engine house would be repaired, painted, and interpreted in waysides and brochures. The two water tanks would be cleaned and repainted to contribute to the cultural landscape.

There would be no personal interpretive services during most of the year. The small museum in the depot would be open and staffed only during peak season.

Although the National Park Service would not use the commercial buildings or the engine house for visitor activities, local community or other interests might undertake efforts to preserve or restore and adaptively use them under the historic leasing program or other methods. If this occurred, the National Park Service could provide technical assistance in protecting the resources and the town.

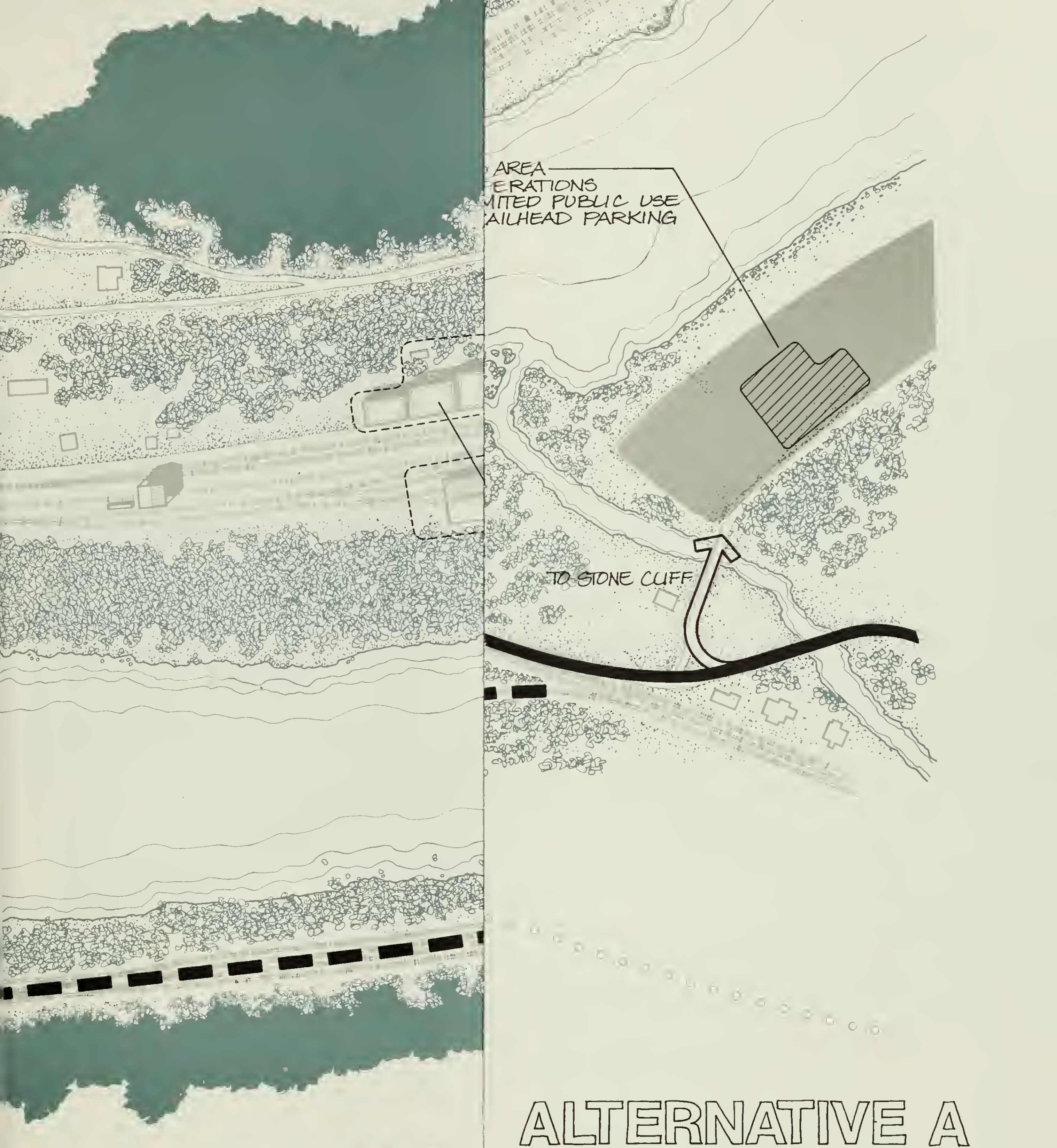
ALTERNATIVE B - HISTORIC PERIOD

Concept

This alternative would focus on the period from 1910 to 1930 when Thurmond was in its heyday, and all preservation and interpretive activities would relate to that period. The objective would be to give visitors a sense of the town during its era of most intense activity. Thurmond would become a major destination within the national river.

Visitor Experience

A series of transitions and visual cues would encourage visitors to step back in time. People would leave their vehicles in the Southside Junction area on the west side of the river and would walk or take a shuttle across the bridge into Thurmond. All historic structures in Thurmond would be returned to their original functions – the depot would be a depot, the bank a bank – and historical activities would be re-created so that visitors could see, hear, smell, and feel the activities of a busy railroad town. In the railyard, visitors could read the rails, see the grease and dirt, and sense the bustle when Thurmond was a railroad center. In the commercial area of the town they could stroll into the restored bank and stores, view old railroad cars and equipment, and participate in interpretive



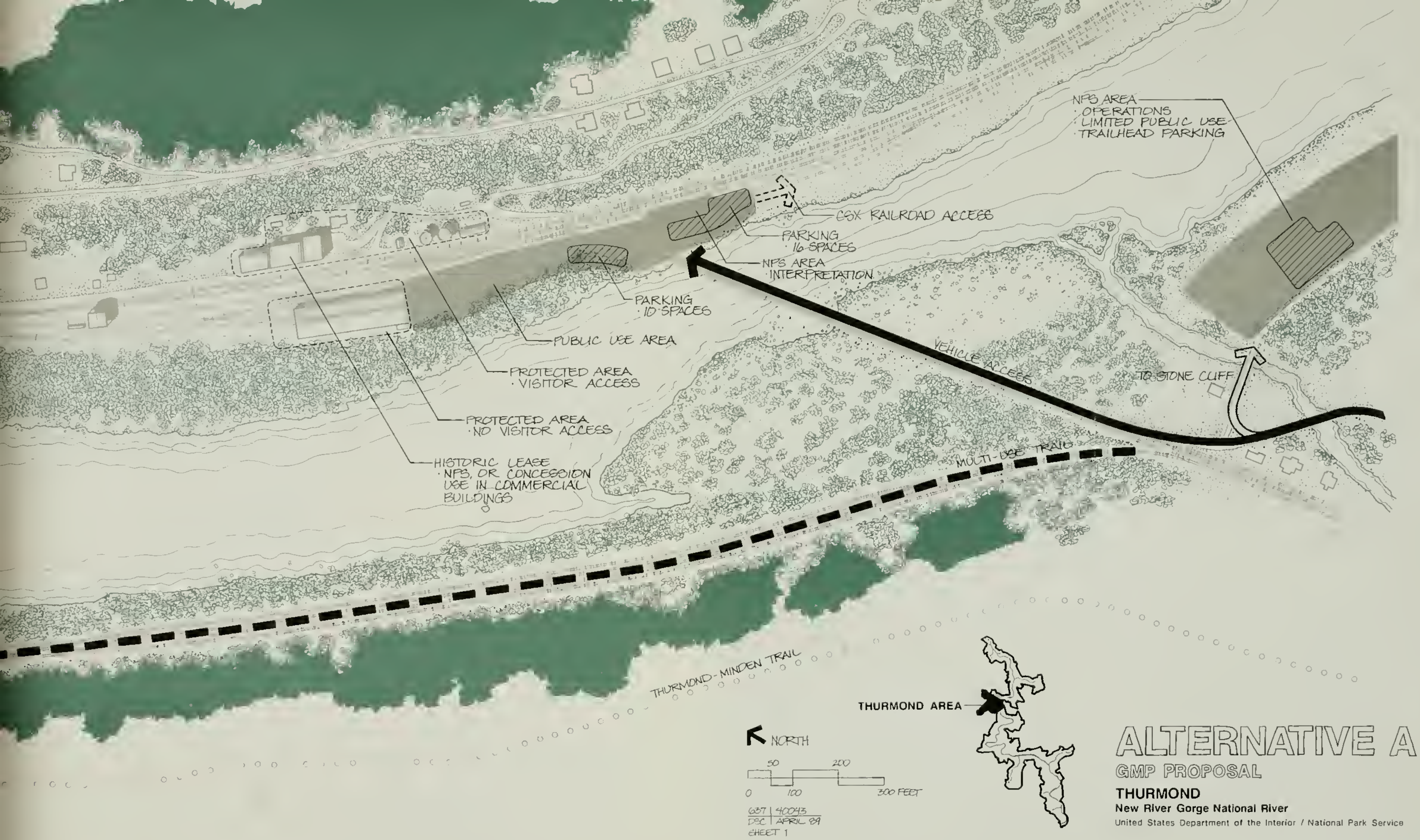
ALTERNATIVE A

GMP PROPOSAL

THURMOND

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service



ALTERNATIVE A

GMP PROPOSAL

THURMOND

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

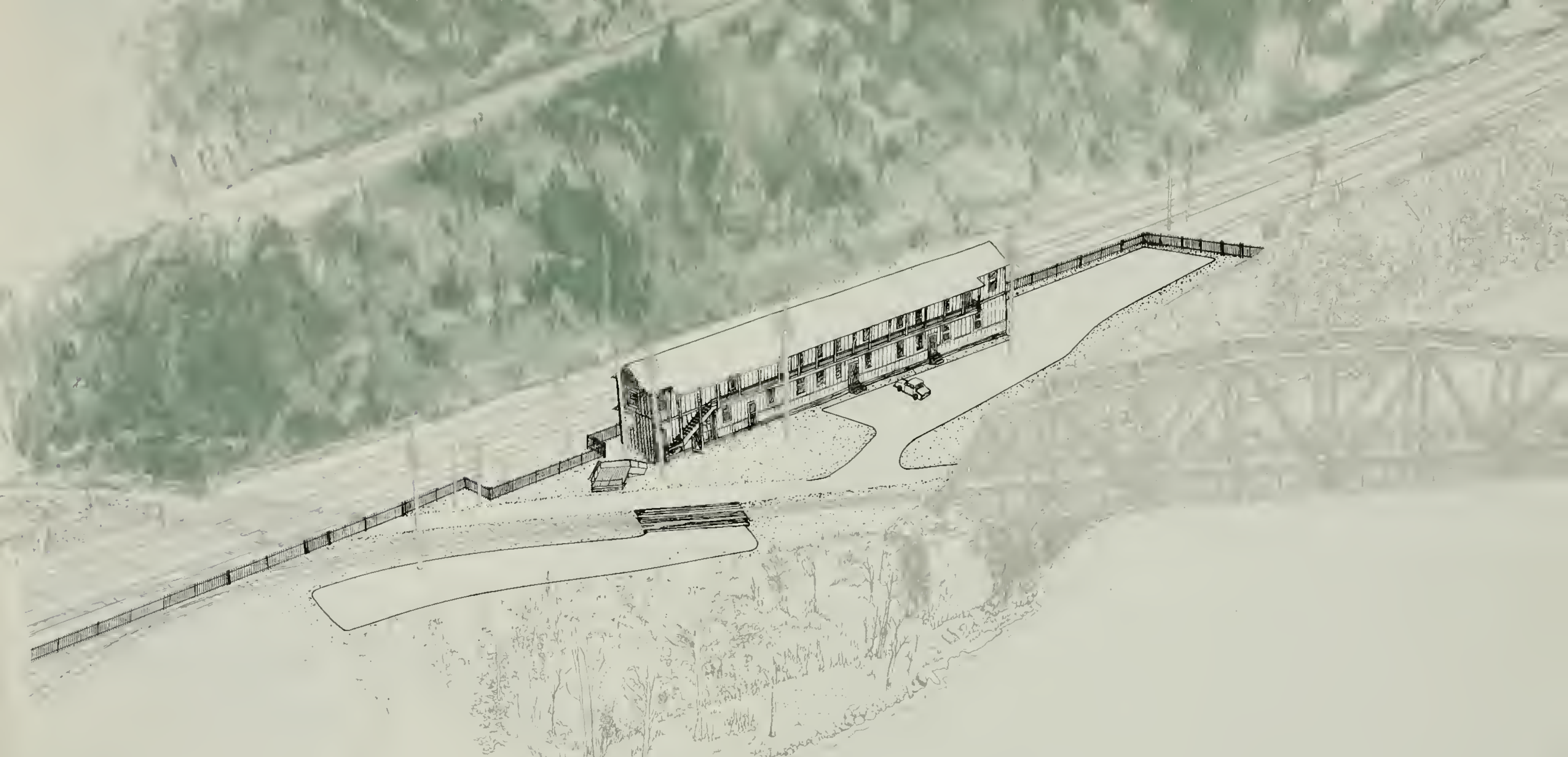
ALTERNATIVE A

GMP PROPOSAL

THURMOND DEPOT

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service



ALTERNATIVE A

GMP PROPOSAL

THURMOND DEPOT

New River Gorge National River

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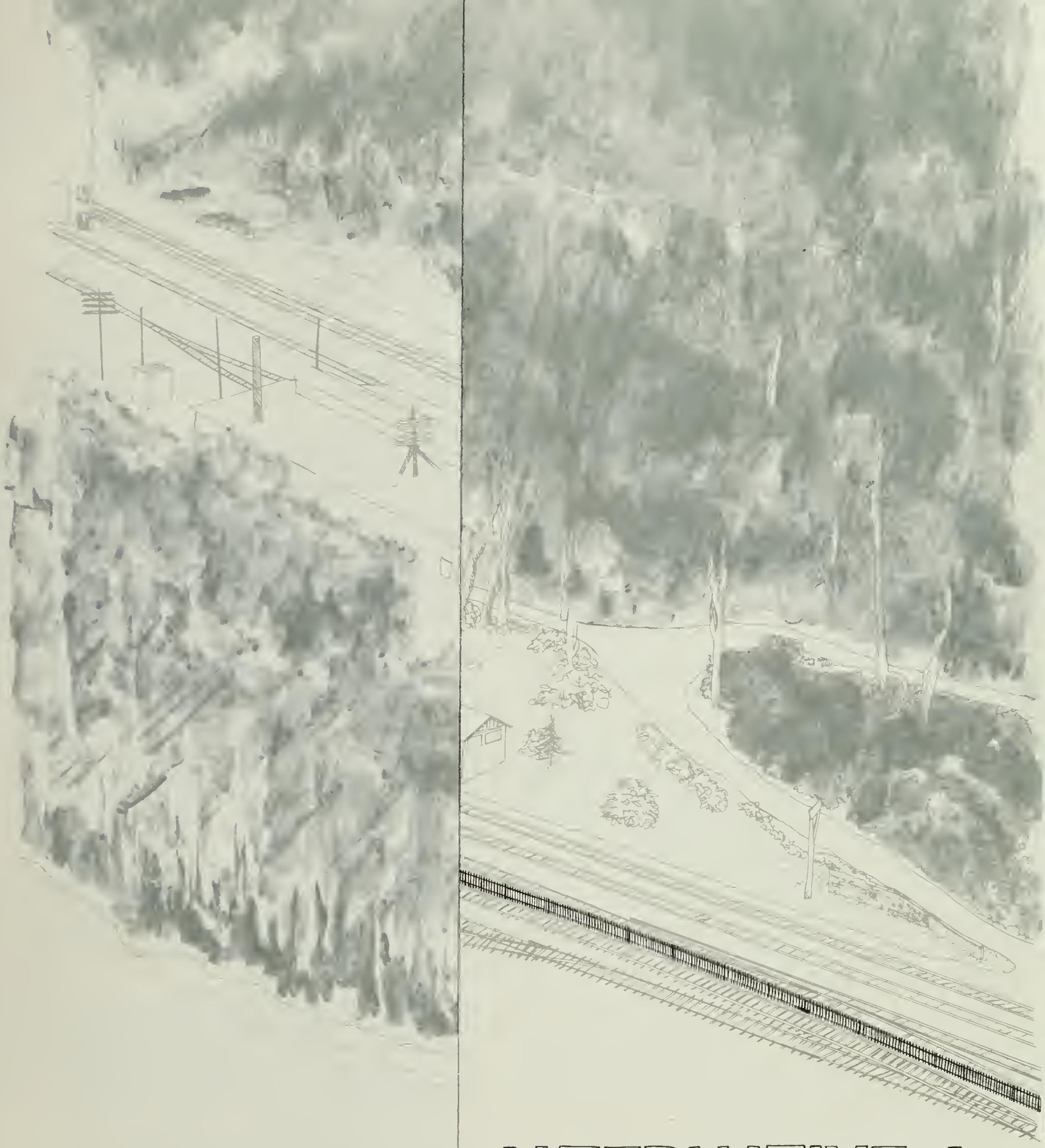


ALTERNATIVE A

GMP PROPOSAL

THURMOND RAILYARD AND COMMERCIAL AREA

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

programs. Living history demonstrations on the lifeways and activities of Thurmond residents and workers would make the town come alive.

Actions

Access. Southside Junction would be the staging area for access into Thurmond. Parking for 100 cars, a comfort station and shelter, and shuttlebus pickup and turnaround points would be constructed on the railroad grade in the former railroad car storage area, as proposed in the GMP. An access road would be constructed into the parking area; the road would make a grade crossing over the Dunloup branch of the railroad and take vehicles into the widest portion of the area. The main parking area would also provide trailhead parking for access to the trail to Cunard. Oversize vehicle parking would be on nearby available land suitable for construction. A sidewalk/boardwalk would connect the parking area to the west end of the railroad bridge.

A new pedestrian walkway, cantilevered onto the railroad bridge, would provide access into Thurmond. An agreement between the National Park Service and CSX Railroad for construction, use, and maintenance of the bridge and walkway would be needed; other methods of using the bridge for pedestrians might also be considered, if feasible. Visitors would walk or be shuttled across the bridge. If feasible, a privately operated railroad might also provide access. Only handicap parking and a shuttle dropoff point would be established on the east side of the river. Limited off-season parking would be provided near the depot. The railroad bridge has a 12-ton load limit, which would restrict large vehicles. School buses would continue to pick up and deliver students near the depot.

Access from the depot and railyard to the commercial area of town would be by way of the at-grade vehicle crossing and road near the depot and a new pedestrian access behind the water tanks.

Resource Protection. The National Park Service would purchase all of the existing railroad buildings, yard features, and commercial buildings in the lower town, and these buildings and features would be restored to the identified time period. Architectural details would be preserved to convey the railroad ambience and the flavor of the town during this time. The two water tanks would be cleaned and repainted to contribute to the cultural landscape. Missing buildings and elements would be illustrated through the use of ghosting (outlining the structure or element to indicate its original appearance) or would be described in brochures; missing features include the Lafayette Hotel, meat packing plant, freight depot, bunkhouse, and various railroad yard features. Only steam-era railroad cars, engines, and equipment would be used for interpretation; diesel-era resources would be removed.

The commercial buildings could be adaptively used under the historic building leasing program, a concession agreement, or direct NPS operation to provide visitor services. Historical uses of the buildings would be the primary objective in all cases, but other compatible and feasible uses might be considered if they would not affect the historic scene or activities in the town. Such uses would be limited to those that would not incorporate or encourage modern elements, such as contemporary signs, window displays, and cars.

New development would be limited, and the only new construction allowed on the east side of the river would be within the historic building context. Public restrooms would be available in the depot, possibly the engine house, and one of the commercial buildings. Some type of zoning or restrictions on the type of construction within the historic viewshed of the town would need to be instituted to maintain the ambience of the town and adjacent areas.

Interpretation. The first attractions in Thurmond would be the railroad depot and railyard. The interior of the depot would be restored to its historic appearance and uses, and costumed staff or volunteers would provide information, interpretation, and tours of the building; restored rooms would be exhibits. Restrooms and a place for book sales would be provided. In the railyard a protective fence would be installed to keep pedestrians off the mainline railroad tracks. The fenced-in area would extend from the south side of the depot to the vicinity of the coaling tower so that this historic feature could be viewed.

The interior of the engine house would be restored to its 1910-1930 appearance; this might include restoration of the general foreman's office, "bullpen," and tool rooms. This building was converted in 1963 for use as a car repair facility and operated for that use until 1985, when CSX abandoned it. After the historic period floor plan was reestablished, steam engines would be brought into the building for display and use in interpretive presentations. Living history demonstrations by the National Park Service or volunteers would illustrate the uses of parts of the building, including the labor-intensive task of engine maintenance.

From the yard visitors would enter the commercial area by way of the vehicle crossing and road near the depot and the new pedestrian access behind the water tanks. Here they could explore the restored buildings, attend living history demonstrations and interpretive programs, and learn about day-to-day activities in the town during the historic period. Steam-era railroad cars and equipment would be exhibited in appropriate areas.

Brochures and books would be available and waysides would be established on the west side of the river to interpret the history of the Dun Glen Hotel and Southside Junction and their relationship to the town of Thurmond. Interpretive media about these features would be limited in the town of Thurmond so it would not distract from the historic scene.

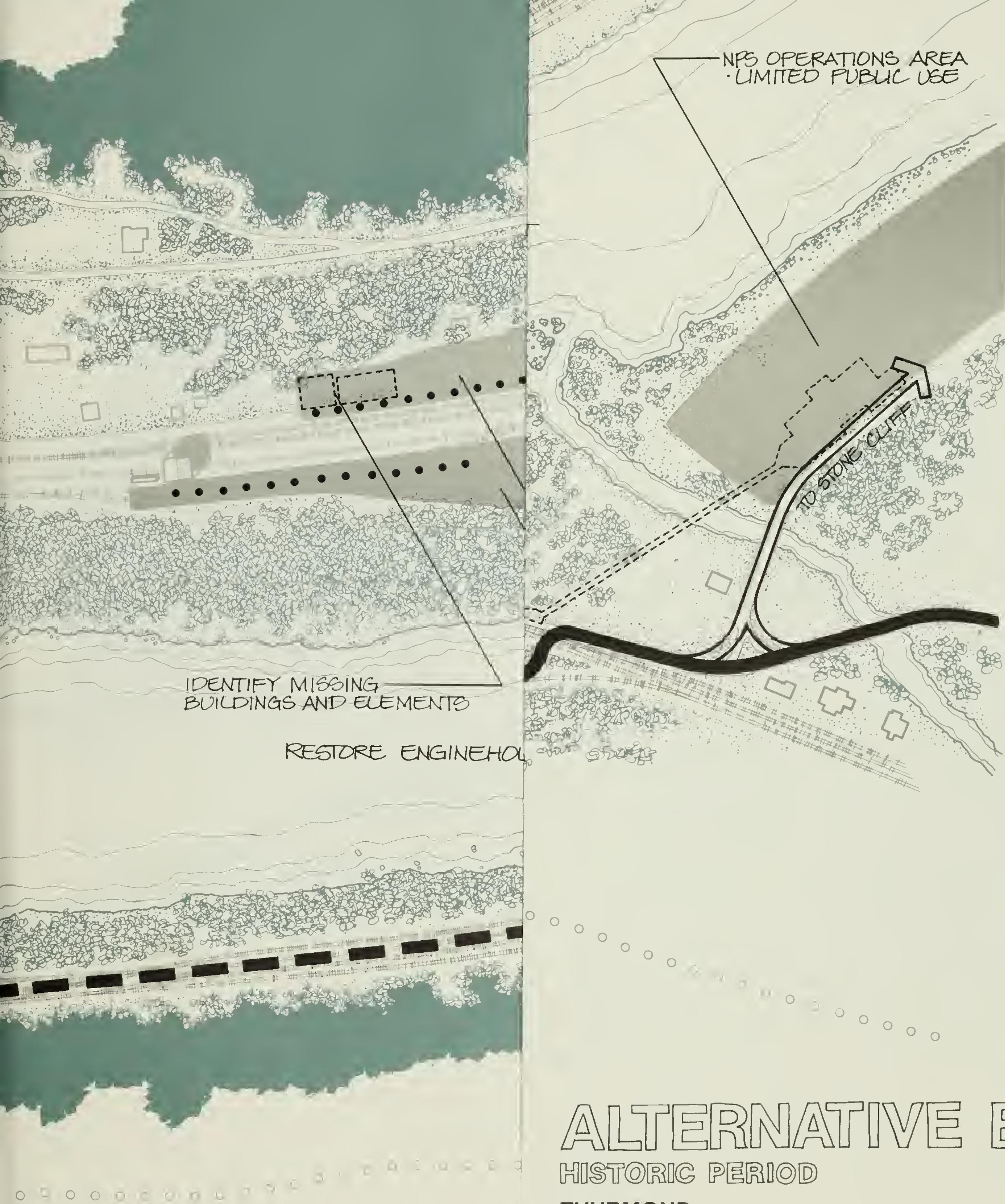
This alternative would require an increase in staff to provide on-site interpretation, resource protection and maintenance, and other visitor services. Living history or costume demonstrations on the lifeways and activities of Thurmond residents and workers would be a major focus of interpretation. Cooperative agreements might be established with local C&O historical societies, model railroad clubs, or railroad groups to provide some of the interpretation in the town.

To broaden awareness of Thurmond's attractions and stimulate visitor interest, increased Amtrak passenger service and excursion trips through the gorge would be encouraged, with Thurmond as a destination point.

ALTERNATIVE C - THE TOWN'S EVOLUTION (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

Concept

This alternative would not highlight a particular period in Thurmond's history; rather, it would illustrate the significance of the town as part of the regional railroad network from 1873, when the C&O Railroad first completed its track in the New River gorge, through the period when diesel replaced steam in firing engines to the present day. The stories of the coal-mining connection, the changes to the regional economy, and the effect of diesel trains on the railroad industry would also be told, to place Thurmond in the larger context of the New River gorge and the C&O Railroad. Thurmond would become a major destination within the national river.



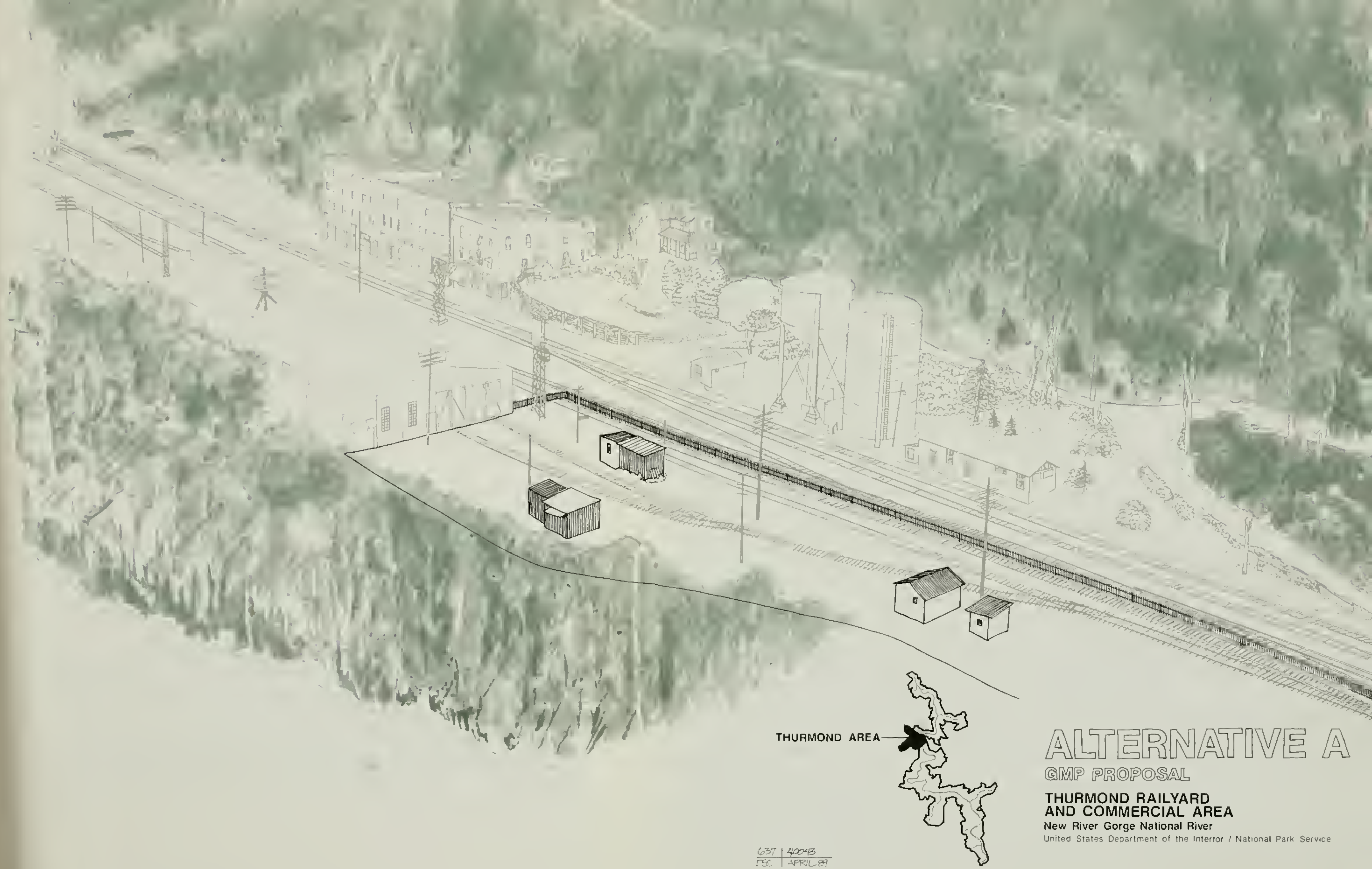
ALTERNATIVE B

HISTORIC PERIOD

THURMOND

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service



ALTERNATIVE A

GMP PROPOSAL

THURMOND RAILYARD AND COMMERCIAL AREA

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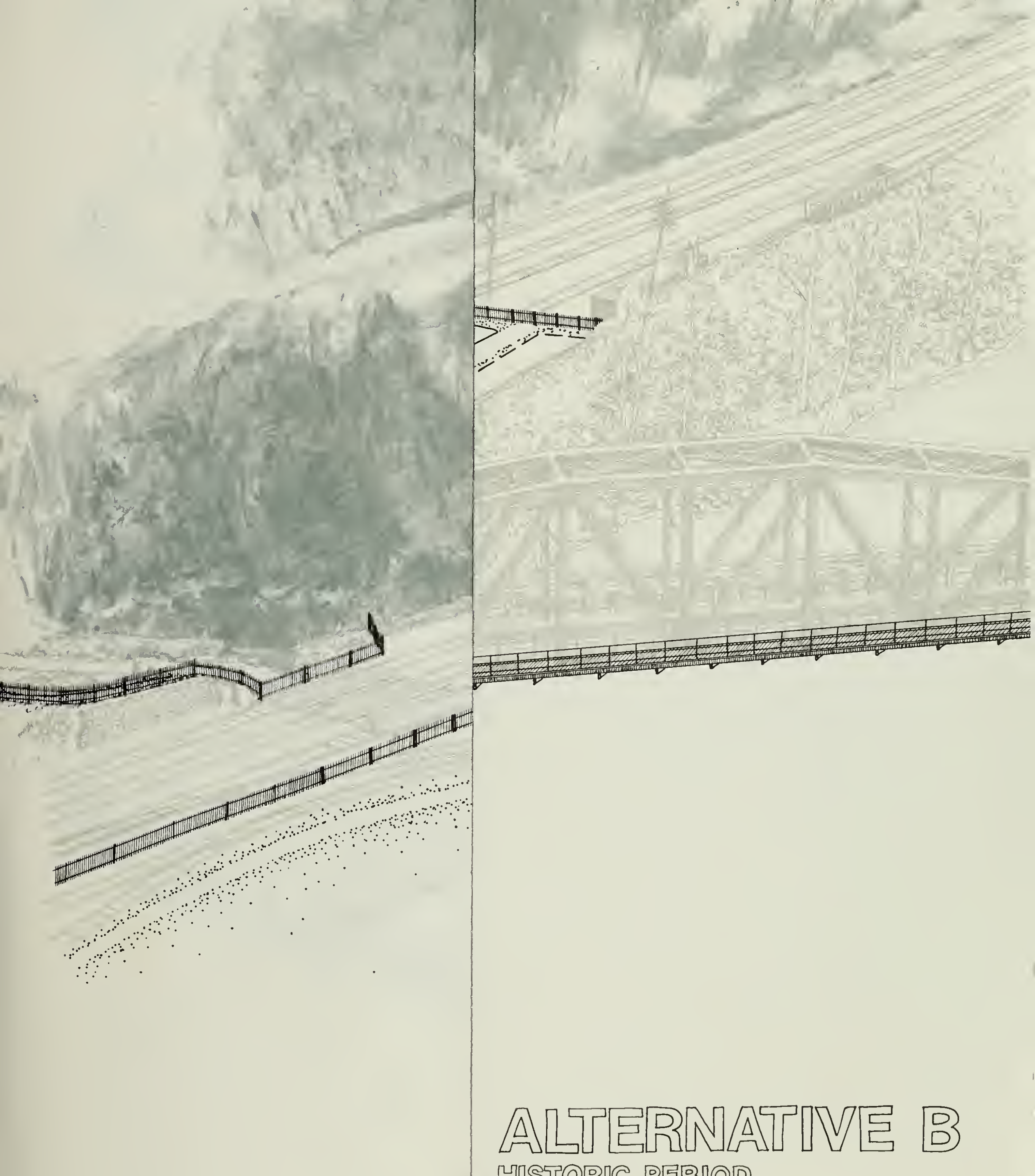

ALTERNATIVE B
HISTORIC PERIOD

THURMOND DEPOT
New River Gorge National River
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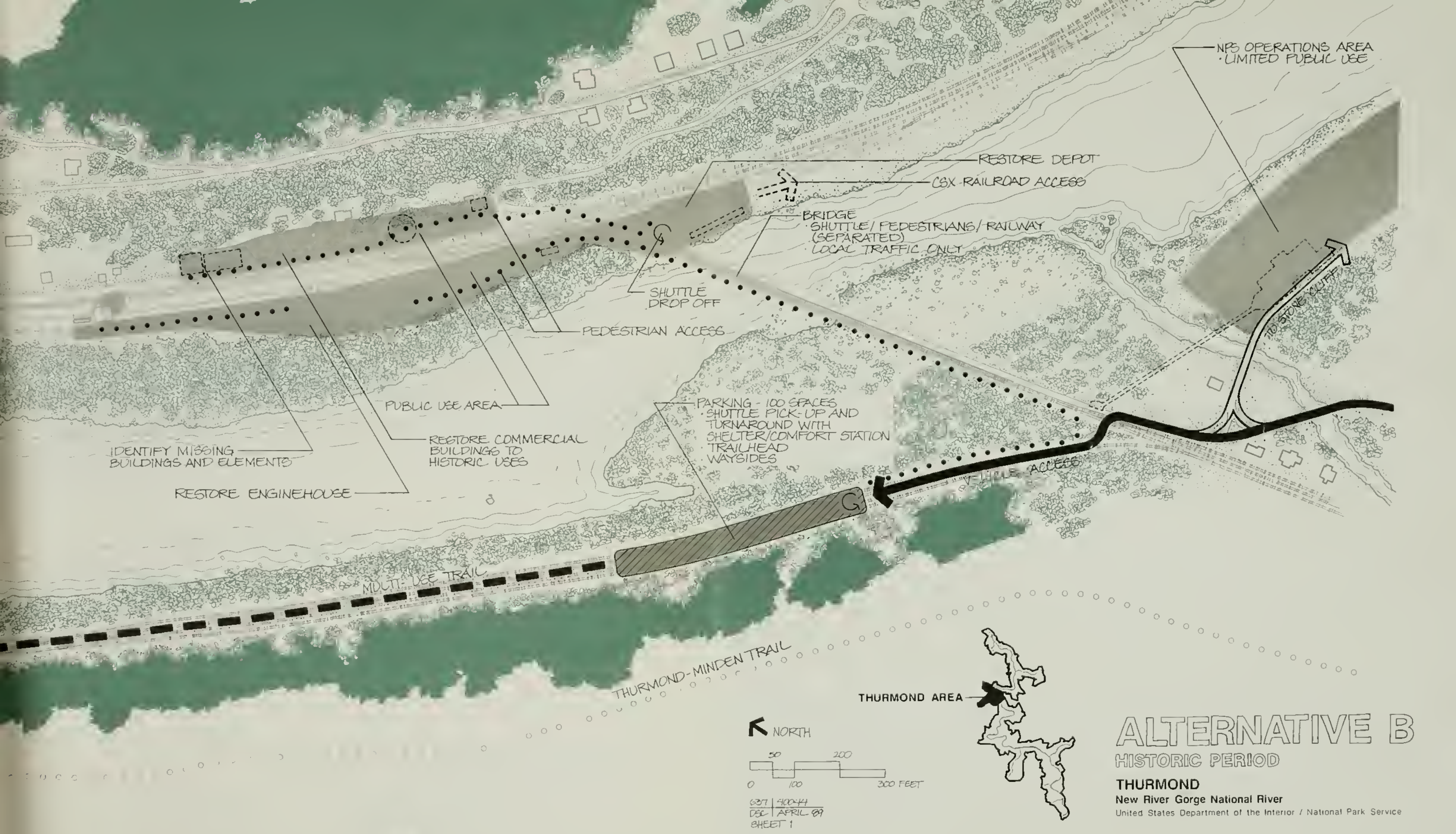

ALTERNATIVE B

HISTORIC PERIOD

THURMOND

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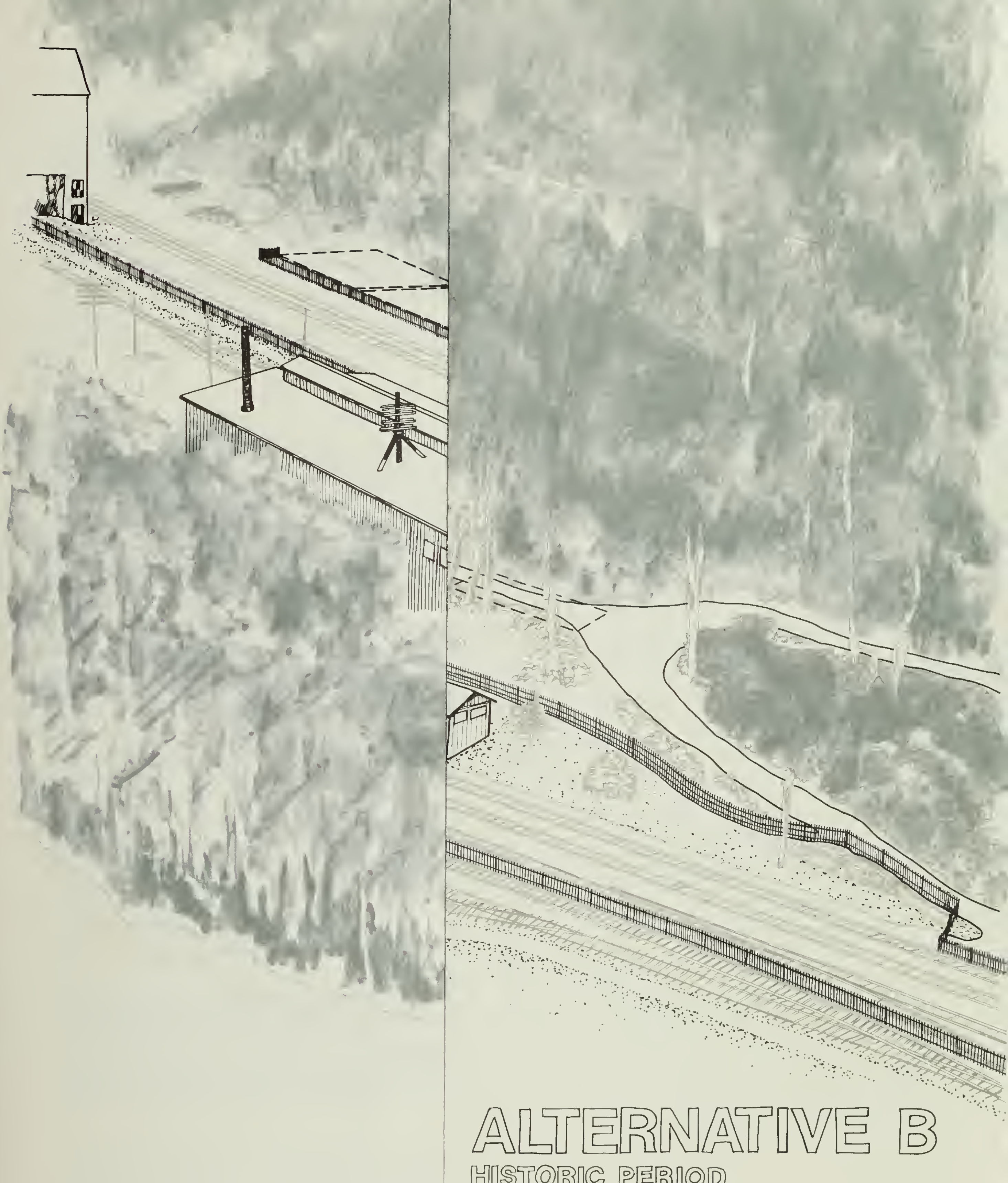

ALTERNATIVE B

HISTORIC PERIOD

THURMOND RAILYARD AND COMMERCIAL AREA

New River Gorge National River

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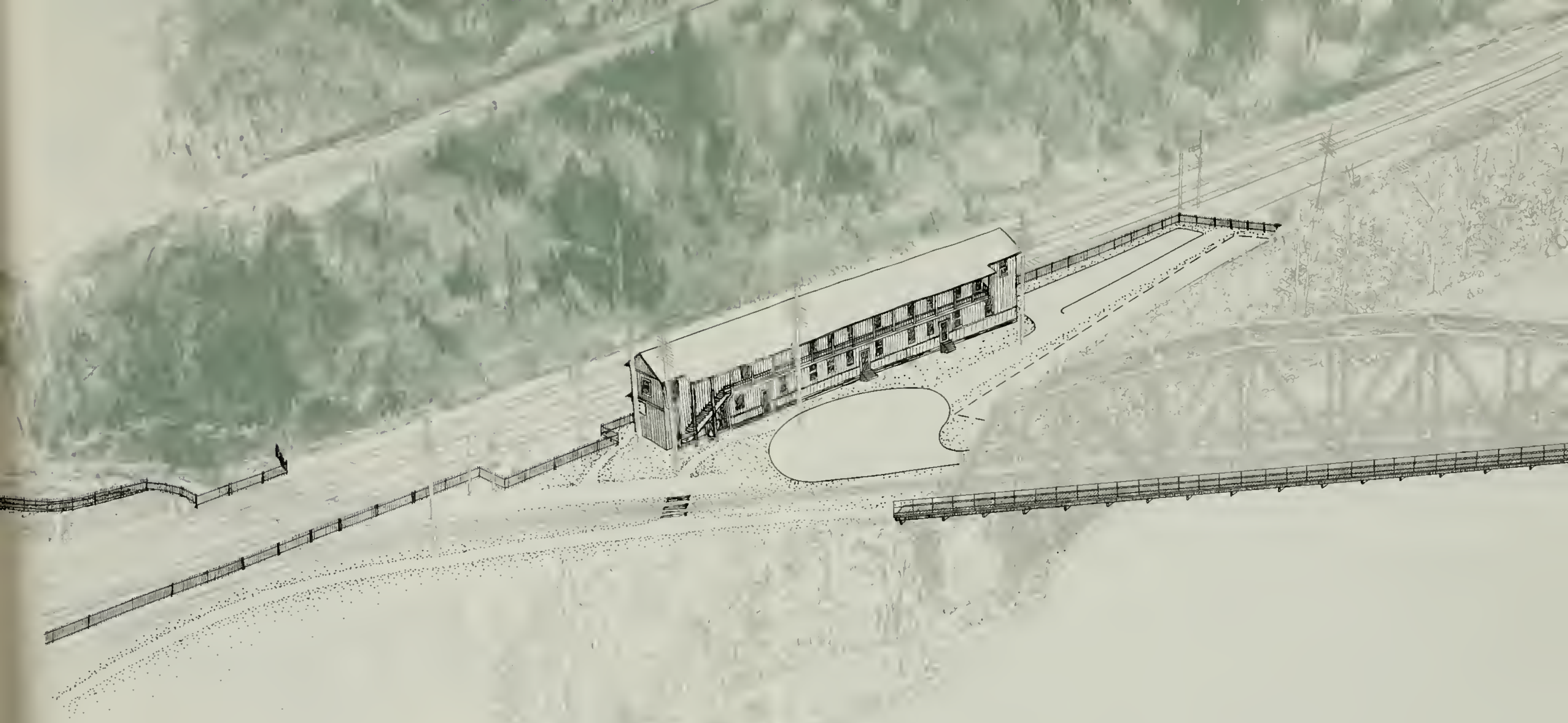

ALTERNATIVE B

HISTORIC PERIOD

THURMOND DEPOT
New River Gorge National River
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Visitor Experience

This alternative would give visitors a broad-stroke view of Thurmond's history and would also provide a lively contemporary setting in the commercial area of town. After crossing the bridge on foot or in a shuttle, visitors would enter the depot and railyard area, where the history and evolution of the railroad industry in this region would be interpreted. Large and small exhibitry in the engine house and depot would play a major part in describing railroad operations and the activities that took place in Thurmond to support them. The growth, success, and subsequent decline of the town as well as its relationship to the outside world would be conveyed through interpretation of the missing and remaining structures in the commercial area and stories of what happened there. Contemporary commercial uses in the adapted buildings would make the town come alive and ensure preservation of remaining elements of this unique railroad community.

Actions

Access. Parking and staging at Southside Junction and access across the railroad bridge would be the same as under alternative B. In addition, a pedestrian tunnel would be constructed beneath the Thurmond railroad tracks from the area of the engine house to the commercial buildings; this tunnel would provide a safe crossing and direct access from the railyard to the commercial area. The at-grade vehicle crossing and road near the depot and a new pedestrian access behind the water tanks would also provide access to the commercial side of the tracks.

Resource Protection. All existing railroad buildings and yard features would be purchased by the National Park Service and preserved and adaptively used to interpret the significance of the town of Thurmond, Southside Junction, and the Dun Glen Hotel and the history of railroading in this region. The two water tanks would be cleaned and repainted to contribute to the cultural landscape. Commercial buildings would also be preserved by the National Park Service, and these structures would be adapted for compatible uses under the historic building leasing program, a concession agreement, or direct NPS operation. Because no attempt would be made to restore the buildings to a specific historic period, a wide range of compatible and feasible uses would be possible, including a hotel or bed-and-breakfast, a restaurant, a retail store, a snack shop, a general store, offices, a hiking/fishing supply store, or other visitor/resident services. Public restrooms would be available in the depot, possibly in the engine house, and in one of the commercial buildings. Compatible new construction would be allowed if it would not have a major effect on the integrity of the town and the qualities defined in its National Register designation. Some type of zoning would be needed to protect the town and adjacent areas from indiscriminate development, but this zoning would be less restrictive than under alternative B.

Interpretation. The depot would be the primary focal point for visitors entering the town. It would be preserved, partially restored, and adapted to provide orientation, information, and interpretation of the railroad and the town, in particular the passenger/traveler aspects of the story. Yard and train activities related to the depot would also be interpreted. Exhibits, possibly historic furnishings in one or more rooms, and cooperating association sales would be housed in the depot.

The engine house would be used to house large exhibits, like railroad cars, engines, or other items. The main interpretive focus here would be the operation of the railroad. All aspects of operations, including employee functions, the interaction of activities, repairs, and marshalling would be illustrated in and around the engine house. Both steam and diesel era activities would be interpreted. A working scale model of the Thurmond railyard would be displayed in the engine house to demonstrate the marshalling of engines and coal cars; it would show the arrival of coal cars from various mines in the gorge and follow their connection to the trains that took them outside the gorge. An exhibit explaining the significance and magnitude of coal exportation from Thurmond on the C&O railroad would also be part of interpretation in this area. The general foreman's office, "bullpen," and tool rooms might be rehabilitated for use as exhibits on steam and diesel operations, the life of engine house employees, and operations in the engine house and east yard areas. Orientation brochures and signs would be used to guide visitors through the large interior expanse of the building.

Visitors would be encouraged to walk in a large area of the railroad yard. A protective fence would be added to keep pedestrians off the mainline railroad tracks. The fenced-in area would extend from the south side of the depot to the vicinity of the coaling tower so that this historic feature could be viewed. Waysides and brochures would explain the historical uses of yard features. Railroad cars stationed in appropriate areas would be exhibits. Amtrak and freight trains passing through the town on the C&O mainline tracks would be effective "exhibits" for illustrating the changes in railroad uses and equipment over the past century.

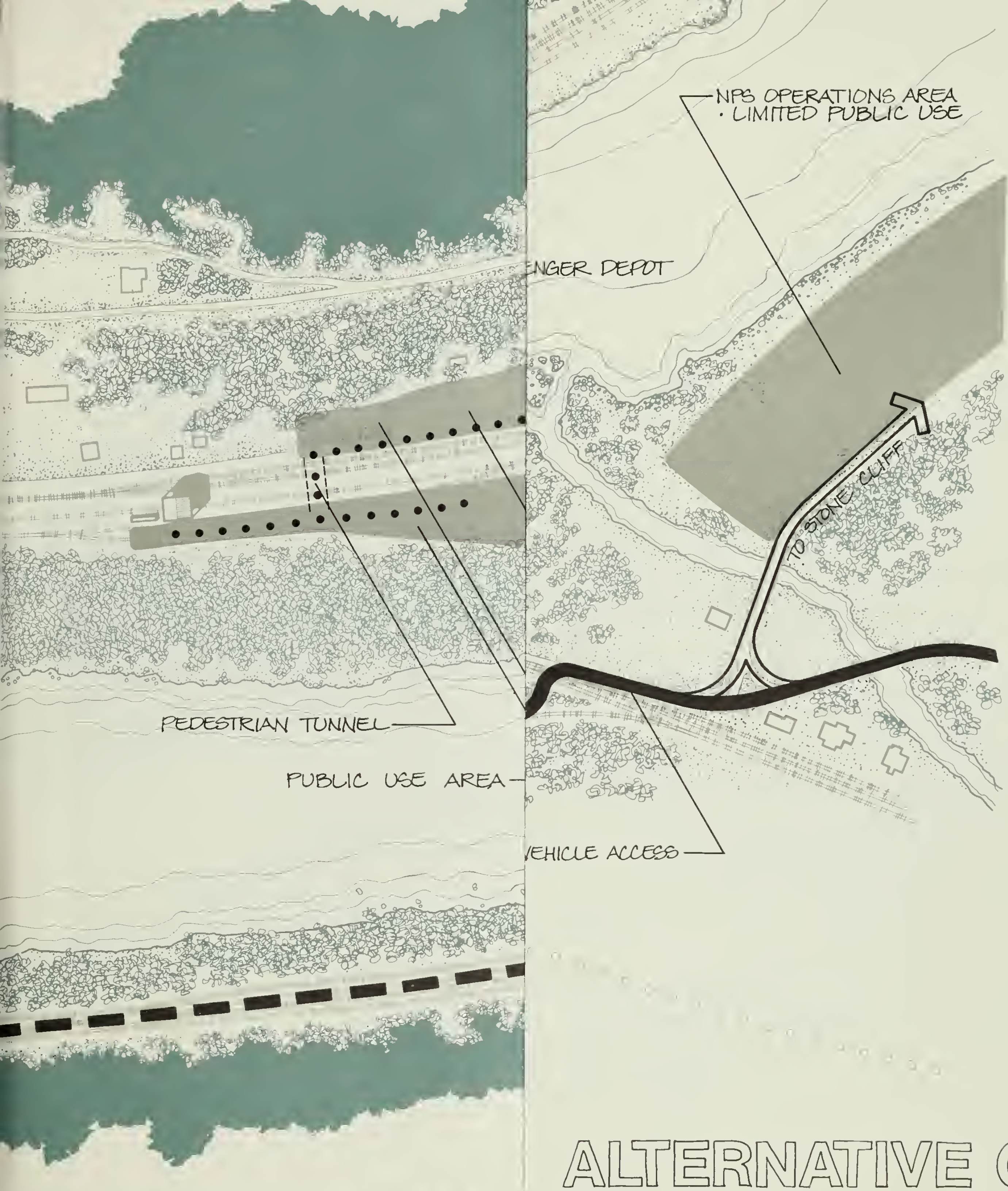
From the engine house and railyard, visitors would enter the commercial area of town through a pedestrian tunnel beneath the railroad tracks. Before entering the tunnel, they would learn about the significance of the commercial block, including missing buildings, to railroad operations and to the town. The importance and colorful history of private enterprise in Thurmond could be interpreted in waysides or by NPS interpreters or volunteers. In the commercial area, specific stories could be related about the banks, stores, and offices in adapted public rooms in the structures themselves. Interpretation about life in Thurmond, important visitors, and the growth and decline of the town could take place in or near the buildings. The renovated and adaptively used commercial buildings would provide a variety of other services and attractions. Establishments focusing on railroading would be of particular interest and could economically benefit the town and others.

Brochures and books would be available and waysides would be established on both sides of the river to interpret the history of the Dun Glen Hotel and Southside Junction and their relationship to the town of Thurmond.

The overall interpretive concept would be communicated through various media (exhibits, audiovisual methods, wayside signs, etc.) and programs and walks guided by uniformed staff and volunteers. Cooperative agreements might be established with local C&O historical societies, model railroad clubs, or railroad buffs to provide some of the interpretation of the history of the town.

This alternative would also require an increase in interpretive, protection, and maintenance staff at the site. The number of staff and volunteers needed would be similar to that of alternative B.

As in alternative B, increased Amtrak passenger service and excursion trips through the gorge would be encouraged, with Thurmond as a destination point.



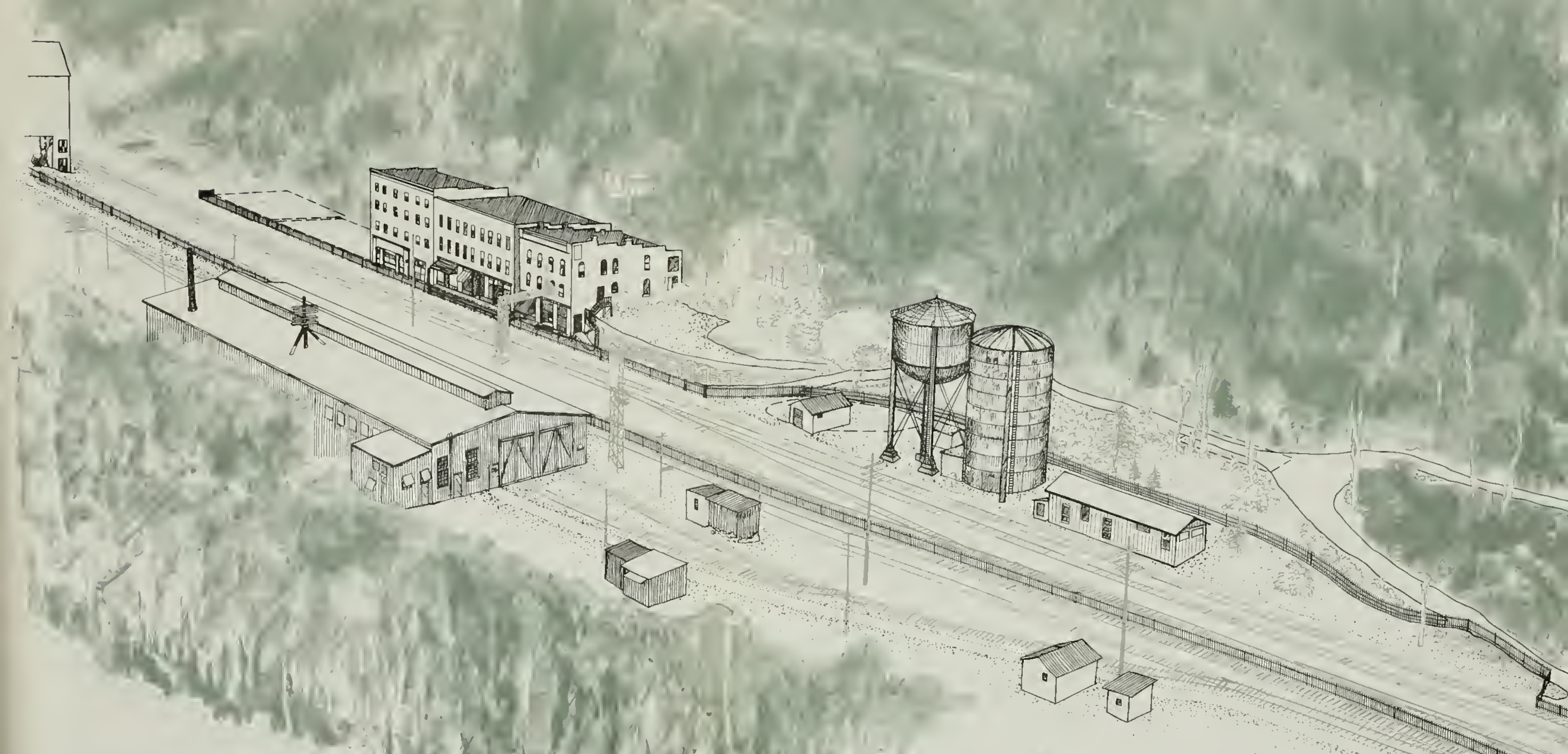
ALTERNATIVE C

TOWN'S EVOLUTION (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

THURMOND

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service



ALTERNATIVE B

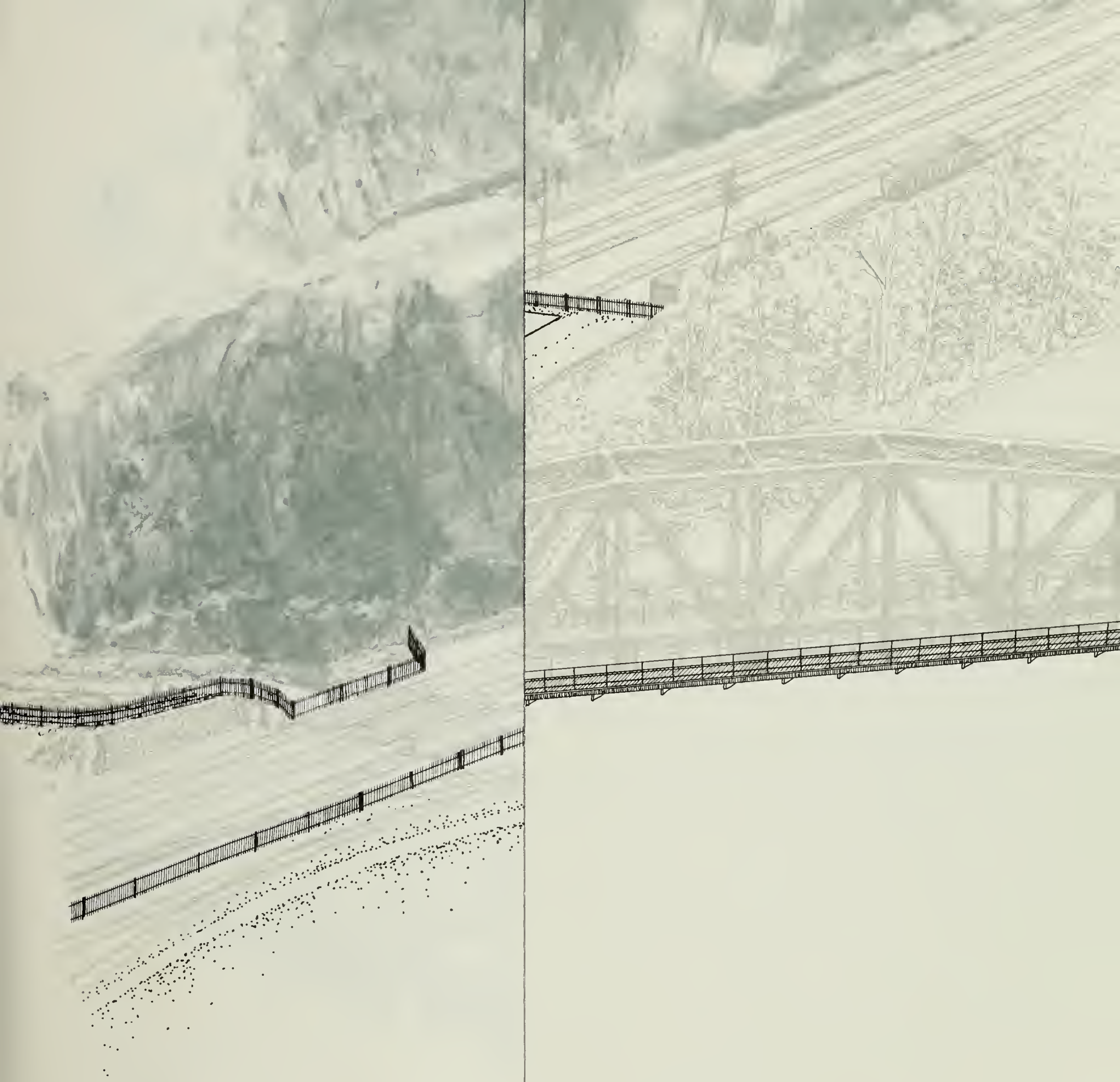
HISTORIC PERIOD

THURMOND RAILYARD AND COMMERCIAL AREA

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

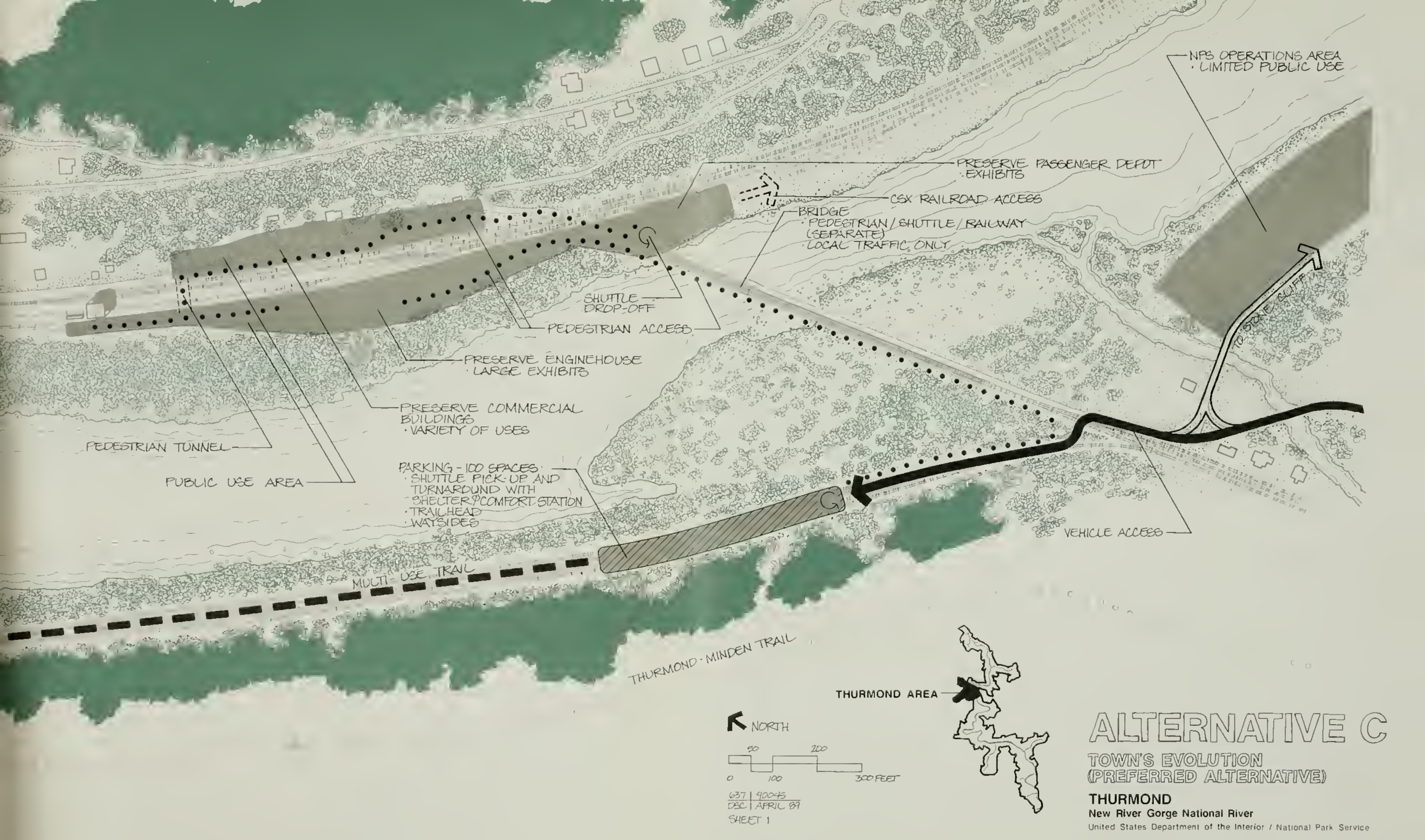
637 | 40044
DSC | APRIL 89
SHEET 2



ALTERNATIVE C

TOWN'S EVOLUTION
(PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

THURMOND DEPOT
New River Gorge National River
United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service



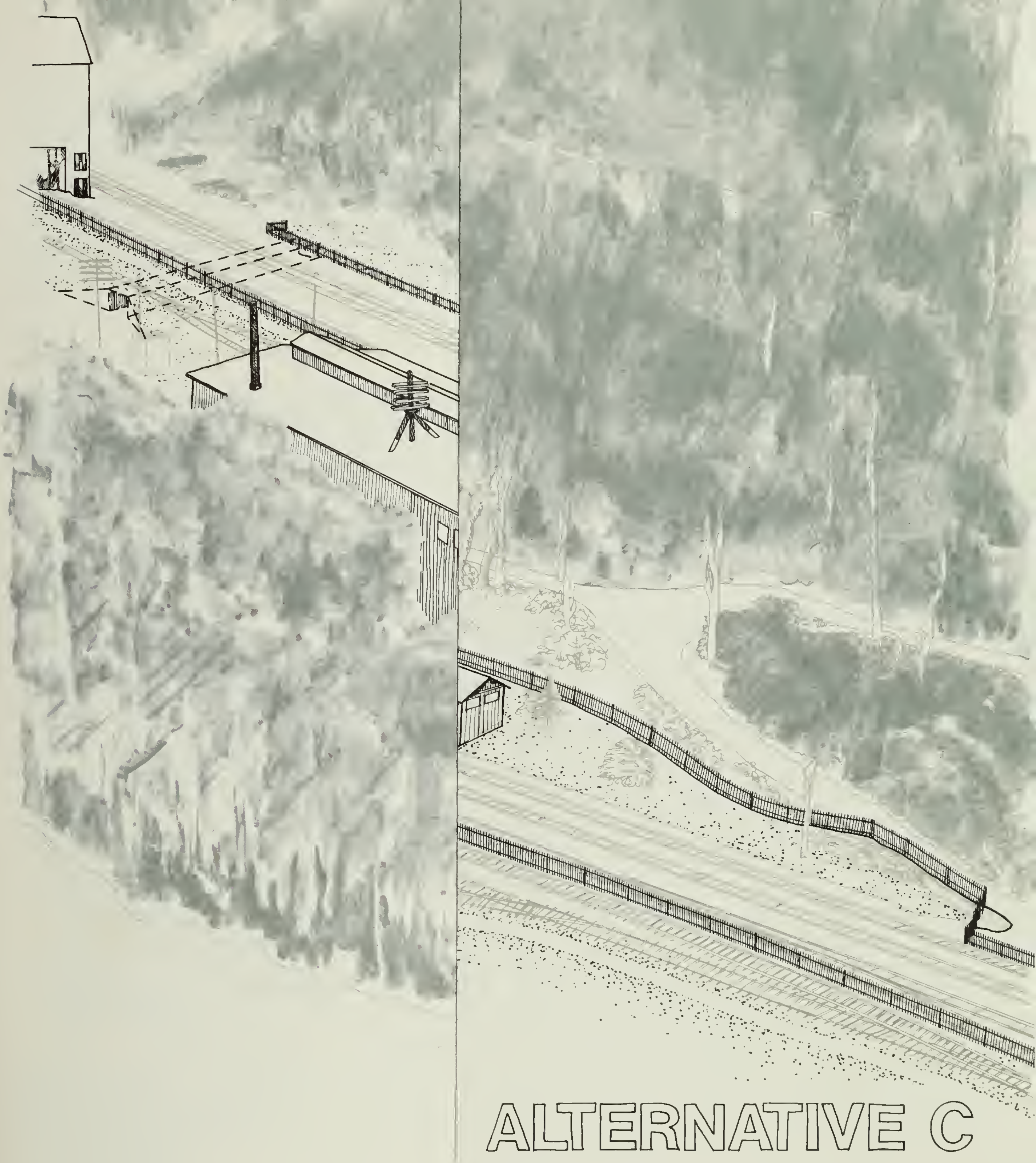
ALTERNATIVE C

TOWN'S EVOLUTION (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

THURMOND

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service



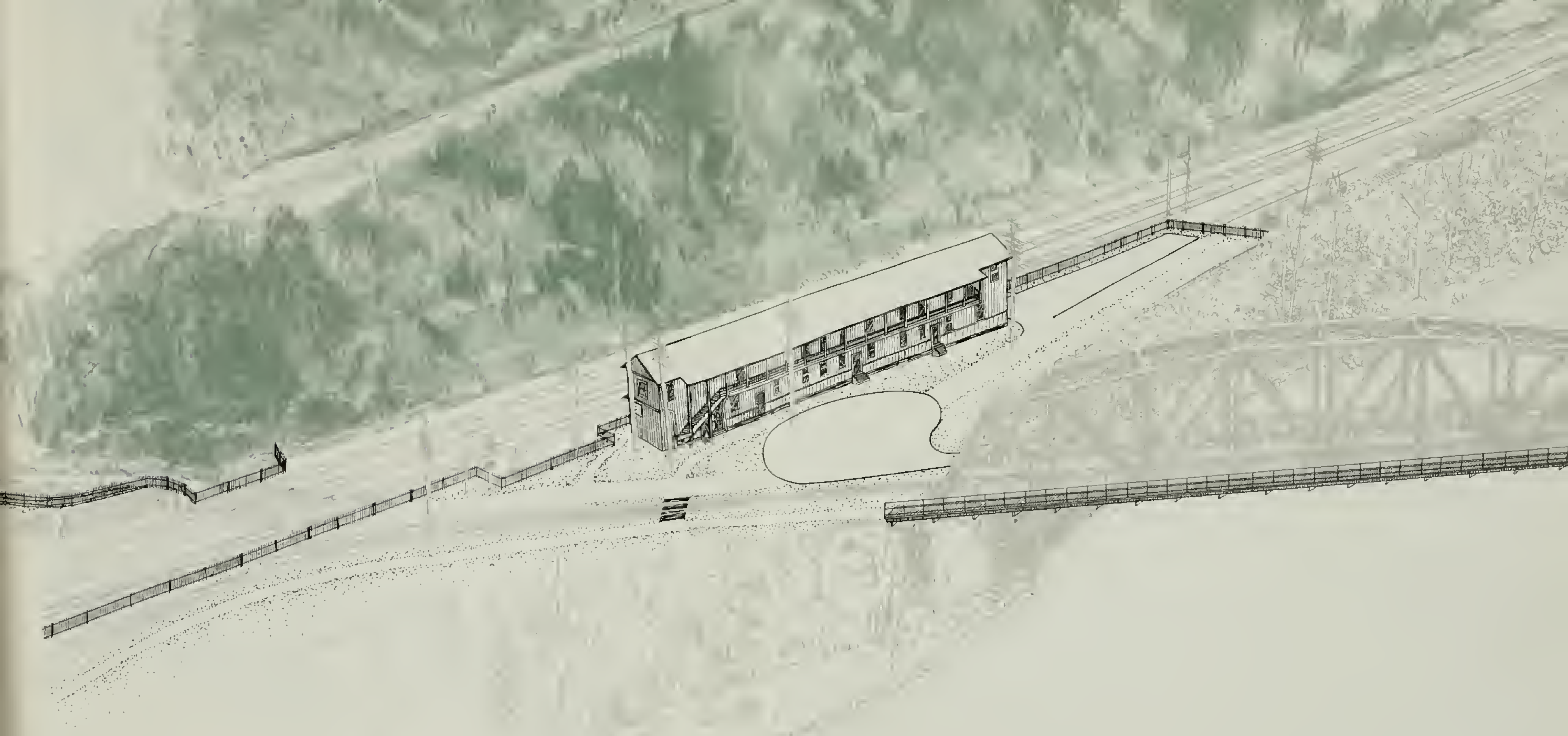
ALTERNATIVE C

TOWN'S EVOLUTION (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

THURMOND RAILYARD AND COMMERCIAL AREA

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service



ALTERNATIVE C

TOWN'S EVOLUTION
(PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

THURMOND DEPOT

New River Gorge National River

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service

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ALTERNATIVE D - CURRENT TRENDS

Under alternative D the National Park Service would not undertake any actions beyond purchase and emergency stabilization of the commercial buildings and the depot in the town of Thurmond. The engine house and other railroad structures and land would not be acquired by the National Park Service. None of the structures would be used for NPS operations, visitor services, or interpretation. Visitors would not be directed to the town, although they might discover it on their own. Trailhead parking and a river access point would be developed at the base camp and Stone Cliff, respectively. A few interpretive waysides would be placed along the Minden trail, and some of these waysides could interpret the town, the gorge, and the railroad story.

COST ESTIMATES

Cost estimates are included for the three action alternatives. These estimates include the costs for resource preservation, new support development, utilities, and interpretive media. The estimated costs to rehabilitate Route 25 are also shown, and the staffing requirements indicated. All costs are 1989 estimates except for the road rehabilitation costs, which are 1987 estimates.

Cost Estimates - Alternative A

Development Item	Gross Construction	Advanced & Project Planning	Total Costs
Emergency Stabilization:			
Engine house - replace column; strengthen heel joints; repair sheathing, sealer	$ 136,000	$ 26,000	$ 162,000
Depot - new foundation and shearwalls	194,000	37,000	231,000
Water tanks (2) - clean, repair, repaint	117,000	22,000	139,000
Commercial buildings - repair roofs, drainage improvements	173,000	33,000	206,000
Subtotal	$ 620,000	$ 118,000	$ 738,000
Stabilization of Buildings (exterior only):			
Engine house	2,148,000	409,000	2,557,000
Yard structures	84,000	16,000	100,000
Commercial area			
National Bank	219,000	42,000	261,000
Goodwin-Kincaid	254,000	49,000	303,000
Mankin-Cox	153,000	64,000	217,000
Houses	66,000	17,000	83,000
Depot (stabilize/restore exterior and two interior rooms)	1,122,000	214,000	1,336,000
Viewing deck	30,000	5,000	35,000
Subtotal	$4,076,000	$ 816,000	$4,892,000
Parking (26 spaces)	92,000	18,000	110,000
Bank repair, fill, and retaining walls	262,000	50,000	312,000
Protection fence and gates	66,000	13,000	79,000
Yard cleanup/repairs	66,000	13,000	79,000
Traffic signals (2)	131,000	25,000	156,000
Intersection improvements	300,000	58,000	358,000
Multipurpose trail	236,000	45,000	281,000
Minden Trail bridge repairs	118,000	23,000	141,000
Signs, lighting, telephone, etc.	52,000	10,000	62,000
Subtotal	$1,323,000	$ 255,000	$1,578,000

Development Item	Gross Construction	Advanced & Project Planning	Total Costs
Utilities:*			
Water (east side)	131,000	25,000	156,000
(west side)	0	0	0
Sewer (east side)	151,000	29,000	180,000
(west side)	0	0	0
Electrical	13,000	3,000	16,000
Subtotal	$ 295,000	$ 57,000	$ 352,000
Harpers Ferry Center:			
Exhibits, waysides, small museum	240,000	60,000	200,000
Grand Total - Alternative A	**$6,554,000**	**$1,306,000**	**$7,860,000**
Road Rehabilitation (1987 costs):			
Glen Jean to Thurmond	–	–	15,800,000
Thurmond to Stone Cliff (FHWA preliminary report includes widening, repairs, guardrails, resurfacing, and bridge replacements)	–	–	2,200,000

Staffing:
- 2 seasonal interpreters
- 1/2 maintenance worker
- 1-1/2 protection staff

Cost Estimates - Alternative B

Development Item	Gross Construction	Advanced & Project Planning	Total Costs
Emergency Stabilization:			
Engine house - replace column; strengthen heel joints; repair sheathing, sealer	$ 136,000	$ 26,000	$ 162,000
Depot - new foundation and shearwalls	194,000	37,000	231,000
Water tanks (2) - clean, repair, repaint	117,000	22,000	139,000
Commercial area - repair roofs, drainage improvements	173,000	33,000	206,000
Subtotal	$ 620,000	$ 118,000	$ 738,000
Restoration of Buildings (exterior/interior/utilities/cleanup):			
Depot	2,286,000	436,000	2,722,000
Engine house	4,863,000	928,000	5,791,000
Yard structures	97,000	19,000	116,000
Commercial area			
National Bank	1,774,000	339,000	2,113,000
Goodwin-Kincaid	1,717,000	328,000	2,045,000
Mankin-Cox	1,197,000	229,000	1,426,000
Houses	905,000	173,000	1,078,000
Elevator	252,000	48,000	300,000
Subtotal	$13,091,000	$2,500,000	$15,591,000

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*Costs are for NPS development actions only and assume acquisition of existing railroad structures.

Development Item	Gross Construction	Advanced & Project Planning	Total Costs
Protection fence and gates (both sides)	242,000	46,000	288,000
Ghosting in buildings or foundations	30,000	6,000	36,000
Yard cleanup/repairs	79,000	15,000	94,000
Pedestrian walkway in yard	66,000	13,000	79,000
Pedestrian walkway behind water tanks	223,000	43,000	266,000
Vegetation removal and landscaping	33,000	6,000	39,000
Shuttle turnaround, handicapped parking, and bank stabilization by depot	498,000	95,000	593,000
Miscellaneous railroad crossing/ warning features	39,000	8,000	47,000
Diesel-era structures demolition/removal	104,000	20,000	124,000
Subtotal	$ 1,314,000	$ 252,000	$ 1,566,000
Southside Junction:			
Parking - 100 cars and shuttle turnaround	188,000	36,000	224,000
Access road	131,000	25,000	156,000
Pedestrian walkway on bridge	1,114,000	213,000	1,327,000
Sidewalk - parking area to bridge	52,000	10,000	62,000
Intersection improvements	367,000	70,000	437,000
Comfort station/shelter	257,000	49,000	306,000
Oversized vehicle parking/building removal	66,000	13,000	76,000
Traffic signals (2)	131,000	25,000	156,000
Multipurpose trail	210,000	40,000	250,000
Minden Trail bridge repairs	118,000	23,000	141,000
Signs, lighting, telephone, etc.	79,000	15,000	94,000
Subtotal	$ 2,713,000	$ 519,000	$ 3,232,000
Utilities:*			
Water (east side)	485,000	93,000	578,000
(west side)	46,000	9,000	55,000
Sewer (east side)	289,000	55,000	344,000
(west side)	98,000	19,000	117,000
Electrical	53,000	10,000	63,000
Subtotal	$ 971,000	$ 186,000	$ 1,157,000
Harpers Ferry Center:			
Historic furnishings, waysides on west side only, publications, etc.	1,133,000	283,000	1,416,000
Grand Total - Alternative B	**$19,842,000**	**$3,858,000**	**$23,700,000**
Road Rehabilitation (1987 costs):			
Glen Jean to Thurmond	–	–	$15,800,000
Thurmond to Stone Cliff (FHWA preliminary report includes widening, repairs, guardrails, resurfacing, and bridge replacements)	–	–	2,200,000

Railroad Switch Maintenance - annual expense per switch, $1,500
Bridge Shuttle Vehicle - $35,000

Staffing:
- 1 full-time interpreter and 3 seasonals
- 1-1/2 maintenance workers
- 2 full-time protection staff and 3 seasonals

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*Costs are for NPS development actions only and assume acquisition of the existing railroad structures. An additional $1.25 million (total costs) would be necessary to add the town of Thurmond to both of the above NPS water and sewer systems. Creation of a utility district might be necessary with the NPS and the town sharing expenses for studies and development. Some costs may be incurred by the lessee or concessioner for the commercial buildings, depending on actual agreements.

Cost Estimates - Alternative C

Development Item	Gross Construction	Advanced & Project Planning	Total Costs
Emergency Stabilization:			
Engine house - replace column; strengthen heel joints; repair sheathing, sealer	$ 136,000	$ 26,000	$ 162,000
Depot - new foundation and shearwalls	194,000	37,000	231,000
Water tanks (2) - clean, repair, repaint	117,000	22,000	139,000
Commercial area - repair roofs, drainage improvements	173,000	33,000	206,000
Subtotal	$ 620,000	$ 118,000	$ 738,000
Restoration of Buildings (exterior/interior/ utilities/cleanup):			
Depot	$ 1,988,000	$ 380,000	$ 2,368,000
Engine house	4,631,000	884,000	5,515,000
Yard structures	84,000	16,000	100,000
Commercial area			
National Bank	1,542,000	293,000	1,835,000
Goodwin-Kincaid	1,494,000	285,000	1,779,000
Mankin-Cox	1,040,000	198,000	1,238,000
Houses	787,000	150,000	937,000
Elevator	252,000	48,000	300,000
Boardwalk	51,000	9,000	60,000
Subtotal	$11,869,000	$2,263,000	$14,132,000
Protection fence and gates (both sides)	242,000	46,000	288,000
Pedestrian tunnel beneath tracks	236,000	45,000	281,000
Ghosting in buildings or foundations	30,000	6,000	36,000
Yard cleanup/repairs	79,000	15,000	94,000
Pedestrian walkway in yard	66,000	13,000	79,000
Pedestrian walkway behind water tanks	223,000	43,000	266,000
Vegetation removal and landscaping	33,000	6,000	39,000
Shuttle turnaround, handicapped parking, and bank stabilization by depot	498,000	95,000	593,000
Miscellaneous railroad crossing/ warning features	39,000	8,000	47,000
Subtotal	$ 1,446,000	$ 277,000	$ 1,723,000
Southside Junction:			
Parking - 100 cars and shuttle turnaround	188,000	36,000	224,000
Access road	131,000	25,000	156,000
Pedestrian walkway on bridge	1,114,000	213,000	1,327,000
Sidewalk - parking area to bridge	52,000	10,000	62,000
Intersection improvements	367,000	70,000	437,000
Comfort station/shelter	257,000	49,000	306,000
Oversized vehicle parking and building removal	66,000	13,000	76,000
Traffic signals (2)	131,000	25,000	156,000
Multipurpose trail	210,000	40,000	250,000
Minden Trail bridge repairs	118,000	23,000	141,000
Signs, lighting, telephone, etc.	79,000	15,000	94,000
Subtotal	$2,713,000	$519,000	$3,232,000

Development Item	Gross Construction	Advanced & Project Planning	Total Costs
Utilities:*			
Water (east side)	485,000	93,000	578,000
(west side)	46,000	9,000	55,000
Sewer (east side)	289,000	55,000	344,000
(west side)	98,000	19,000	117,000
Electrical	53,000	10,000	63,000
Subtotal	$ 971,000	$ 186,000	$ 1,157,000
Harpers Ferry Center:			
Exhibits, waysides, publications, historic furnishings, audiovisuals, etc.	1,314,000	251,000	1,565,000
Grand Total - Alternative C	**$18,933,000**	**$3,614,000**	**$22,547,000**
Road Rehabilitation (1987 costs):			
Glen Jean to Thurmond	–	–	15,800,000
Thurmond to Stone Cliff	–	–	2,200,000
(FHWA preliminary report includes widening, repairs, guardrails, resurfacing, and bridge replacements)			

Railroad Switch Maintenance - annual expense per switch, $1,500
Vehicle for bridge shuttle - $35,000

Staffing:

- 1 full-time interpreter and 3 seasonals
- 1-1/2 maintenance workers
- 2 full-time protection staff and 3 seasonals

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*Costs are for NPS development actions only and assume acquisition of the existing railroad structures. An additional $1.25 million (total costs) would be necessary to add the town of Thurmond to both of the above NPS water and sewer systems. Creation of a utility district might be necessary with the NPS and the town sharing expenses for studies and development. Some costs may be incurred by the lessee or concessioner for the commercial buildings, depending on actual agreements.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Following is the approximate order in which actions should take place to implement any of the action alternatives. The order is based upon current information about landownership and possible NPS acquisitions, building conditions, local concerns, and availability and needs for utilities. This listing may vary as the planning, design, or other factors continue based upon the validity or changes of the above factors and others not yet evident.

Alternative A:
- Emergency stabilization
- Utilities
- Depot stabilization/restoration
- Other building stabilization
- Protection fences/gates
- Parking
- Trails
- Route 25 rehabilitation

Alternative B:
- Emergency stabilization
- Utilities
- Depot restoration
- Commercial buildings
- Engine house
- Yard features
- Pedestrian walkway on bridge
- Protection fences/gates
- Southside Junction parking/comfort station/sidewalk
- Balance of repair/restoration on east side
- Trails
- Route 25 rehabilitation
- Balance of development on west side

Alternative C:
- Emergency stabilization
- Utilities
- Depot restoration
- Commercial buildings
- Engine house
- Yard features
- Pedestrian walkway on bridge
- Protection fences/gates
- Southside Junction parking/comfort station/sidewalk
- Balance of repair/restoration on east side
- Trails
- Route 25 rehabilitation
- Balance of development on west side
- Pedestrian tunnel

ALTERNATIVE A - GMP PROPOSAL

Impacts on Cultural Resources

To protect as much of the cultural landscape as possible, at least the railroad property and commercial buildings would need to be in public ownership. The CSX railroad company is no longer maintaining the structures and would likely remove them for liability purposes if the National Park Service did not acquire them. Stabilization would be undertaken to preserve any structures that were acquired. This level of treatment would minimally satisfy the legislative requirements for "conserving and interpreting" historic resources in the gorge as defined in the GMP. Archeological evaluation would be required before any ground-disturbing activities.

Minimal stabilization, rather than a higher level of treatment, would have the effect of creating a ghost town instead of a revitalized, living town. The visual qualities of the main commercial area would be preserved. There would be few, if any, effects on resources from visitor use of the area.

Impacts on Natural Resources

Based on consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, there would be no effects on any federally listed threatened or endangered species. Mountain bittercress (*Cardamine clematitis*) is a southern Appalachian endemic species that grows on the rich, mesic forested floodplains of New River Gorge; however, it is not known to occur in the study area.

No significant impacts on vegetation, wildlife, fisheries, or water quality would occur. No rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal species have been identified in the study area, and no wetlands are known to exist.

No significant impacts on air quality would occur. A state permit and sedimentation plan would be required to mitigate the possible effects of sedimentation on the river during stabilization of buildings and construction of new parking. State permits would be required for new utilities.

Some historic structures are at the 100-year floodplain level. Measures to protect the buildings and the river would be necessary.

Impacts on Visitor Experiences

This alternative would restrict visitor access to the railroad structures and yard features because of the installation of protective fences and implementation of other safety measures. Resources in the town would be available for viewing, and limited interpretive media would be provided. However, proposals in this alternative would not contribute greatly to the area's attraction or to visitor knowledge and experiences in the park.

Impacts on the Community of Thurmond

This alternative would not promote commercial activities in the town of Thurmond and would not address the concerns of local residents interested in developing such activities and providing new opportunities for economic enhancement.

Access for local residents and railroad personnel would be slightly affected because of the installation of the protective fence at the depot; however, gates would be placed at appropriate locations to permit access to the town and railroad property. There could be minor effects on residents from the small increases in visitors to the site. Traffic on the access bridge would increase, and a traffic signal might be required to control vehicle access.

ALTERNATIVE B - HISTORIC PERIOD

Impacts on Cultural Resources

This alternative would result in restoration and preservation of all existing historic structures and features in the railyard and main commercial area of Thurmond and re-creation of the 1910-1930 ambience. These actions would have positive effects on cultural resources, but they would not eliminate modern intrusions on the historic setting. Parking and support facilities at Southside Junction and the base camp as well as Amtrak trains, automobiles, and shuttle buses would continue to be visible from Thurmond, and any new developments in the town could also intrude on the scene. Development restrictions would be required to protect Thurmond's visual qualities and prevent new construction that would diminish its historic integrity. Missing buildings and activities would limit the accuracy of the historic setting.

Because visitors would have access to a large portion of the railyard and town, the need for protection measures to ensure visitor safety and reduce the railroad's liability would increase. The addition of modern protective fencing in the railyard would somewhat diminish this otherwise historical setting.

Archeological evaluations would be required before any ground-disturbing activities.

Impacts on Natural Resources

Based on consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, there would be no effects on any federally listed threatened or endangered species. Mountain bittercress (*Cardamine clematitis*) is a southern Appalachian endemic species that grows on the rich, mesic forested floodplains of New River Gorge; however, it is not known to occur in the study area.

The exotic species Kudzu would be removed from the commercial area of Thurmond, and its further growth controlled.

No significant impacts on vegetation, wildlife, fisheries, or water quality would occur. No rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal species have been identified in the study area, and no wetlands are known to exist.

No significant impacts on air quality would occur. A state permit and sedimentation plan would be required to mitigate the possible effects of sedimentation on the river during restoration of buildings and construction of new parking and facilities. State permits would be required for new utilities.

Some historic structures are at the 100-year floodplain level. Measures to protect the buildings and the river would be necessary.

Impacts on Visitor Experiences

Restoration of all existing buildings and features in the railyard and commercial area of Thurmond and re-creation of the historic ambience during the 1910-1930 period would set the stage for interpretation of the significance of the town and its railroad activities at this time. Opportunities to learn about and enjoy Thurmond as well as other park attractions in the vicinity would be greatly enhanced.

Some factors would detract from experiences in Thurmond. Visitors would not see the town exactly as it was because of missing historic buildings and activities, and some modern developments and activities (Southside Junction parking, Amtrak trains, automobiles, and shuttles) would continue to intrude on the historic scene. The scene and period interpretation could be further diminished if new developments were permitted in the town or its viewshed. Wherever possible, modern intrusions would be screened from view using appropriate native vegetation.

Impacts on the Community of Thurmond

The creation of a historical attraction in Thurmond would stimulate increases in visitation, resulting in economic revitalization of the town, the immediate area, and all of the towns and areas between Glen Jean, Thurmond, and Stone Cliff. New opportunities would be created for local residents and landowners to operate retail establishments in Thurmond's commercial buildings.

Restoring the town and surrounding areas for visitor use would cause changes, both positive and negative, in the way of life in Thurmond. Upgraded utilities and improvements to Route 25 would benefit local residents, and actions to preserve and adaptively use the railyard and commercial area would revitalize the town. However, the quiet and secluded lifestyle of the area would be altered, and it is possible that visitor activities could intrude on residents. The installation of protective fences and gates would complicate residential access; in addition, traffic signals on the one-lane bridge might be necessary to regulate vehicle access. The National Park Service would work closely with the state and local residents to provide the easiest possible access to their homes.

The economic viability of railroad passenger service to Thurmond and commercial activities in the town would greatly increase. Restricting commercial activities to those present in historic times or those serving visitors would somewhat limit options for people proposing to use the historic buildings.

ALTERNATIVE C - THE TOWN'S EVOLUTION

Impacts on Cultural Resources

This alternative would focus on preservation of existing railroad buildings and yard features; buildings in the main commercial area of Thurmond would be adaptively used for a wide range of commercial activities and visitor services. Because these activities would not be tied to a specific historic period, the historic integrity and fabric of the National Register properties in the commercial area might be compromised to accommodate new uses. Any actions taken in these buildings would be preceded by appropriate compliance work. Some development restrictions might be required to protect Thurmond's visual qualities and prevent new construction that would diminish its historic integrity.

Parking and support facilities at Southside Junction and the base camp as well as Amtrak trains, automobiles, and shuttle buses would continue to be visible from Thurmond; however, because the town would not be restored to a specific period and would include modern as well as historic activities, the impact of these intrusions would not be great.

Because visitors would have access to a large portion of the railyard and town, the need for protection measures to ensure visitor safety and reduce the railroad's liability would increase. The addition of modern protective fencing in the railyard would somewhat diminish the cultural landscape; however, because this alternative would illustrate the town's evolution to the present time, the effect of modern additions would be less than under alternative B.

Archeological evaluations would be required before any ground-disturbing activities.

Impacts on Natural Resources

Based on consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, there would be no effects on any federally listed threatened or endangered species. Mountain bittercress (*Cardamine clematitis*) is a southern Appalachian endemic species that grows on the rich, mesic forested floodplains of New River Gorge; however, it is not known to occur in the study area.

The exotic species Kudzu would be removed from the commercial area of Thurmond, and its further growth controlled.

No significant impacts on vegetation, wildlife, fisheries, or water quality would occur. No rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal species have been identified in the study area, and no wetlands are known to exist.

No significant impacts on air quality would occur. A state permit and sedimentation plan would be required to mitigate the possible effects of sedimentation on the river during preservation of buildings and construction of new parking and facilities. State permits would be required for new utilities.

Some historic structures are at the 100-year floodplain level. Measures to protect the buildings and the river would be necessary.

Impacts on Visitor Experiences

Preservation of the railyard buildings and features and development of the town's commercial area would set the stage for interpretation of the history and significance of Thurmond over the years and of the evolution of railroad activities in the gorge. Opportunities to learn about and enjoy the town as well as other park attractions in the vicinity would be greatly enhanced.

The Southside Junction parking area and other modern developments and activities would be visible from the town. If necessary, these modern intrusions would be screened from view using appropriate native vegetation.

Impacts on the Community of Thurmond

The creation of a visitor attraction in Thurmond would stimulate increases in visitation, resulting in economic revitalization of the town, the immediate area, and all of the towns and areas between Glen Jean, Thurmond, and Stone Cliff. New opportunities would be created for local residents and landowners to operate retail establishments in Thurmond's commercial buildings.

Preserving and developing the town and surrounding areas for visitor use would cause changes, both positive and negative, in the way of life in Thurmond. Upgraded utilities and improvements to Route 25 would benefit local residents, and actions to preserve and adaptively use the railyard and commercial area would revitalize the town. However, the quiet and secluded lifestyle of the area would be altered, and it is possible that visitor activities could intrude on residents. The installation of protective fences and gates would complicate residential access; in addition, traffic signals on the one-lane bridge might be necessary to regulate vehicle access. The National Park Service would work closely with the state and local residents to provide the easiest possible access to their homes.

The economic viability of railroad passenger service to Thurmond and commercial activities in the town would greatly increase. A wide range of commercial activities would be possible in the town.

ALTERNATIVE D - CURRENT TRENDS

Impacts on Cultural Resources

National Park Service acquisition and emergency stabilization of the commercial buildings and railroad depot would save these structures. However, the lack of action for other structures would result in the eventual loss of those buildings and the character and historic integrity of the town. Existing railroad structures and yard features that were not acquired by the National Park Service would most likely be removed by the CSX railroad. The condition of the structures, the high costs of protecting and maintaining them, and the liability concerns would leave few options for other possible private owners to develop the railroad site within a reasonable time period.

Impacts on Natural Resources

No new impacts on the natural environment would be expected. Kudzu would continue to grow, with no controls.

Impacts on Visitor Experiences

A small number of visitors might continue to visit Thurmond, drawn primarily by the river-rafting operations. However, they would remain uninformed about the significance of Thurmond and its history in the New River Gorge.

Impacts on the Community of Thurmond

Minimal action by the National Park Service to protect and preserve Thurmond's historic resources would contribute to the town's decline. Buildings and features would continue to deteriorate, and local residents might to be forced to seek employment in the surrounding communities. The community would continue to suffer from a lack of identity and might eventually be abandoned.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: PLANNING DIRECTION

The alternatives considered in this document are based on the direction given in the 1982 *General Management Plan*, the 1988 *Management and Development Guidelines* that updated the GMP and established a framework for site-specific planning, and the park's "Interpretation Program Plan." The following factors aided in determining the scope and focus of the Thurmond planning project.

NEW RIVER GORGE NATIONAL RIVER

Park Purpose

Conserve and interpret outstanding natural, scenic, and historic values and objects in and around New River Gorge.

Allow resource-based recreation that does not impair resource values.

Park Significance

Size and topographic relief make the gorge an outstanding scenic resource in West Virginia.

New River Gorge provides some of the best extended season white-water boating in the eastern United States.

New River is the top warm-water stream fishery in the state.

New River is believed to be the oldest river on the North American continent, and it illustrates "rejuvenated stream" process.

The river corridor has resulted in unusual plant and animal diversity.

New River Gorge contains remains of the mining and transportation of "smokeless" coal, which played a major role in America's industrial history.

Management Objectives

Protect and maintain the natural diversity of plants and animals.

Sustain the warm-water fishery while protecting natural diversity.

Preserve outstanding scenic views in and around the gorge – preserve the natural setting in the gorge from I-64 north except at interpreted cultural sites and existing communities; conserve the rural pastoral scenery south of I-64.

Encourage visitors to use related interpretive and recreation sites outside the park boundary.

Preserve coal mining, railroading, and other historic resources that best illustrate park significance.

In cooperation with others, achieve and maintain water quality to meet state standards that allow for primary human contact.

Develop a system of land- and water-based recreation opportunities that allow visitors to experience the park's resources to the extent that natural, cultural, and scenic values are not impaired.

The local towns and communities associated with New River are significant resources and integral to the visitor experience; therefore, the National Park Service will work with these communities to help perpetuate their character and vitality.

Work with the community to the extent possible to help them maximize economic benefits related to park development without impairing key resources.

Interpretive Themes

New River Gorge National River today represents a change in America's values and the perception of wildlands over the last 200 years – from that of wilderness as a barrier to human progress to that of wildlands for inspiration and recreation.

New River is unique because it was formed so much earlier than most of the rivers we see today, and, unlike most rivers, the New has retained its course despite significant geological changes.

The character of the New River and its gorge has resulted in a significant concentration of biological and cultural diversity that is well-illustrated in the park.

New River Gorge exemplifies the rapid industrialization of America at the turn of the 20th century. This industrialization prompted major man-made changes in the gorge's ecosystem and the appearance of the landscape.

In order to successfully find, use, and enjoy park resources, visitors to the park require special information.

MIDDLE GORGE PLANNING UNIT

New River Gorge has been divided into four planning units, each with its own significant character in terms of landforms, vegetation patterns, and settlement: Upper Gorge (Hinton to Meadow Creek), Glade Creek (Glade Creek drainage), Middle Gorge (Prince/Quinnimont area to north of Thurmond), and Lower Gorge (north of Thurmond to the north park boundary). Objectives have been developed for each of the units to direct planning activities that will maintain and enhance its character. The Thurmond area is located at the northern tip of the Middle Gorge planning unit. Following is a summary of the unit's overall character and objectives.

Character and Significance

The Middle Gorge unit is characterized by steep slopes, a narrow river valley, and small settlements constructed in a rustic architectural style.
The river offers opportunities for kayakers and canoeists to negotiate some rapids, but the waters do not pose the degree of difficulty encountered by rafters in the Lower Gorge unit.

The Middle Gorge unit has a variety of natural, cultural, and recreational features and opportunities that are accessible by an existing road network that extends the entire length of the unit.

Objectives

Retain the rural character of the park and roads within the boundary while providing safe vehicular access and circulation.

Establish places to view the New River Gorge and the features that best represent park interpretive themes and stories.

Provide park visitors with information to help them reach and use park sites that accommodate their recreational choices.

Provide safe and efficient river put-in facilities at both ends of this unit.

Limit park visitor traffic within existing residential areas.

Provide basic visitor comfort facilities at existing shoreline recreation sites and other visitor use areas.

APPENDIX B: STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING REPORT

Introduction

This report documents a structural investigation of the historic structures in Thurmond. The investigation was performed during the week of September 19-23, 1988, by structural engineer Larry Reynolds, civil engineer Nellie Lance, and outdoor recreation planner Linda Romola. This report discusses only the major structural problems and does not address the numerous minor problems.

Background

To assist the planning team in developing alternatives for Thurmond, a cursory investigation of the historic structures was performed. The structures that were investigated included the engine house, commercial buildings, and water tanks. The depot was investigated in 1986, and those findings and recommendations are summarized in this report.

Findings

Engine House. The most serious problem with the engine house is that one of the timber columns that supported a roof truss has failed. This is a serious problem and if not corrected could lead to a partial collapse of the building. Also, much of the wall sheathing in this area is missing. This allows rain and snow to enter the building and cause further damage.

The heel joint of the roof trusses consists of a double bottom chord member bolted to a vertical web member with one bolt. The bottom chord on many of the trusses has split from the bolt to the end of the member and, therefore, there is little or no bearing surface for the bolt. It appears that the bottom chord tension forces are being resisted by friction between the bolt and bottom chord. This is an unsafe condition, especially under heavy snow loads when large tension forces are developed.

Virtually all of the timbers in the engine house have been treated with creosote. There are restrictions regarding the use of creosote for interior applications. Generally, it is required that two coats of sealer be applied to all of the creosote-treated wood. It does not appear that a sealer has been applied to the creosote-treated wood in the engine house.

Commercial Buildings. Almost all of the structural framing members in the National Bank of Thurmond and Mankin-Cox buildings are concealed by floor and ceiling finishes; thus, no assessment of their condition could be made. However, there do not appear to be any major structural problems with either of these buildings.

The Goodwin-Kincaid building is essentially a shell consisting of 18-inch stone masonry walls. There is no roof framing, and a few rusted iron floor beams and columns are all that remain of the second floor framing.

The stone masonry walls are approximately 40 feet high and are unbraced for that height on three sides of the building. The fourth wall is common with the National Bank of Thurmond building. This means that the unbraced height to thickness ratio of the three walls is 27, which exceeds the building code maximum allowable of 20. Although the walls did not show any signs of distress, problems could easily develop because of the high unbraced height.

Water Tanks. The 100,000-gallon water tank is an elevated steel tank with a timber roof. Much of the paint on the steel portion of the tank has failed, allowing extensive rusting to occur. This corrosive activity has eaten away a large hole in the web at the base of one of the four columns. This hole will continue to grow unless preventive measures are undertaken. Also, the timber roof appears to be damaged and in need of repair.

The 200,000-gallon tank is a steel standpipe type and also has failed paint and extensive rusting. This has contributed to some minor spalling of the concrete foundation wall.

Depot. The depot has undergone significant settlement as indicated by the eave lines of the building not being level. Also, the exterior side walls are not plumb, indicating that the building does not have adequate resistance to lateral loads.

The cause of the settlement appears to be the lack of a proper foundation. Basically, the foundation consists of wood blocks that do not extend below frost depth. Because of this, the building is subject to movement of the soil caused by freeze-thaw cycles.

Recommendations

The failed timber column in the engine house should be replaced as soon as possible. The heel joints of all of the trusses should be strengthened and sealer applied to all of the timbers.

Further investigation is necessary to determine the condition of the framing members in the National Bank of Thurmond and Mankin-Cox buildings. This could be accomplished as part of the historic structures report.

The walls of the Goodwin-Kincaid building should be checked periodically for any signs of movement. If movement does occur, it may be necessary to install a bracing system.

The water tanks should be blasted clean, and all severely corroded areas repaired. The timber roof of the 100,000-gallon tank should also be repaired. After the repairs are accomplished, the tanks should be protected with an appropriate paint system.

A new concrete foundation should be installed to support the depot, and it should extend below frost depth. New shear walls should also be installed to give the building resistance to lateral loads and to help keep the exterior walls plumb.

All of the structures should be surveyed for the presence of hazardous materials. If hazardous materials are found, appropriate steps can be taken to mitigate the problem.

APPENDIX C: PUBLIC MEETINGS

Preliminary Public Involvement - July 1988

A public meeting to discuss issues and concerns about Thurmond with any interested citizens was held at 6:30 p.m. at the Thurmond Union Church on July 13. Approximately 50 individuals attended the meeting. Concerns brought up during discussions about the future of the Thurmond area were as follows:

River Access:

> Will commercial outfitters be able to use the same access as individuals?
>
> Need to provide access for fishing, canoes, kayaks, "4-wheel" river access areas, and handicap use.

Thurmond:

> Protect the depot for visitors and a museum.
>
> The engine house should be saved.
>
> A parking area should be provided for visitors.
>
> Commercial uses should occur in historic buildings.
>
> Limit access to the residential area.
>
> Route 25 to/from Glen Jean should be improved.
>
> The rail spur on Dunloup Creek should be developed for access.
>
> A bicycle path on the railroad spur to Glen Jean should be developed.
>
> More hiking trails should be developed.
>
> Sanitation facilities should be improved in Thurmond.
>
> Weight limits/bus use and access on existing bridge into Thurmond are concerns.
>
> What about existing and future camping?
>
> Possible river access could be at the site of Erskine.
>
> McKendree Road could be improved for access.

Oak Hill Meeting - November 30, 1988

This public meeting was held at the Holiday Inn in Oak Hill at 7:00 p.m. to discuss preliminary DCP alternatives. Approximately 25 area residents attended the meeting and participated in discussions after the presentation.

Summary of comments:

Maintain traditional access patterns – to fishing and hiking areas.

Continue to improve access to the river.

Protect sensitive areas like the Kates Branch wetlands.

Consider access to different parts of the park for handicapped visitors.

Do not consider the idea of a "parkway" that goes all the way from I-64 to I-77.

Locate the visitor center at the site of key activities.

Keep the visitor center away from special areas.

Pay more attention to camping.

Thurmond Meeting - February 9, 1989

A meeting with town officials was held at Mayor John Bullock's house in Thurmond at 7:00 p.m. to brief them on the status of the project work for Thurmond, to discuss preliminary alternatives and objectives, and to receive input and comments. Approximately 10 residents attended the meeting.

Summary of comments:

Want to maintain access to upper town.

Safety is a concern because of train speed and chemicals being transported through town.

Need improvements to water and sewer systems.

Possible employment opportunities for Thurmond residents.

When will the NPS acquire commercial and railroad property?

Unlawful activities occur along river.

What will happen to the post office?

Thurmond Meeting - August 29, 1989

A meeting with town officials were held at the Banker's Club in Thurmond at 7.00 p.m. to present alternatives for NOS activities in the town. These alternatives are presented in the document. The August 29 meeting was held because of a request from the town officials to present the alternatives to them when they were approved. Seventeen local residents and regional and county officials attended the meeting.

Summary of comments:

> What happens if the NPS is not able to acquire the depot or engine house? Will the buildings be protected?
>
> Residents would like the NPS to assist them in efforts to slow the speed of trains through town.
>
> How will the NPS regulate local traffic (both residents and guests) into town?
>
> How will the NPS address security in the town?

No additional suggestions, besides those discussed in the alternatives, for uses of the town's commercial structures were received from the attendees.

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NATIONAL
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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering wise use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The department also promotes the goals of the Take Pride in America campaign by encouraging stewardship and citizen responsibility for the public lands and promoting citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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